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BELIEFS THAT MATTER

BELIEFS THAT MATTER

A THEOLOGY FOR LAYMEN

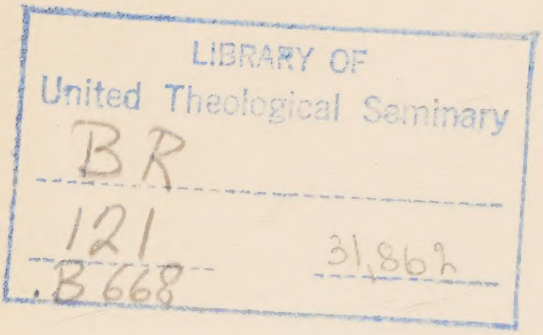
BY

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN, PH.D., D.D.

AUTHOR OF

THE LIFE OF PRAYER IN A WORLD OF SCIENCE

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN OUTLINE, ETC.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The interpretation of Christian belief which follows has three parts. The first is concerned with man and the world in which he lives; the second with Christ and the Cross by which he reveals God; the third with the Church, through which the Spirit of God, using Bible and Sacraments as his instruments, interprets to succeeding generations the meaning of this revelation.

A single thought runs through the whole—that of the Creative Experience; or, in other words, the new life which God, the Creative Spirit, is bringing to birth in men and women. In Part I we see how this new life manifests itself in individuals as, in their search for a free and meaningful life, they are brought face to face with the mystery of personality. In Part II we see the Creative Spirit grappling with the tragedy of evil as it meets us in its triple form—as pain, as sin, and as death. In Part III we study the outworking of the new life in fellowship as we see the Spirit, who is recreating individual men and women, fashioning institutions fitted to express the social ideals of free personalities.

PREFACE

This book is neither a history of belief nor an apology for believing. It is a statement as plain as I can make it of what one modern Christian believes may be a practicable faith for the men and women of to-day.

The faith I would interpret is the Christian's faith. I am well aware that Christianity is not the only living religion, nor the Christian's way the only way in which devout souls have conceived their relation to the ultimate reality. But Christianity is the religion to which we of the West stand the closest, the medium through which, if at all, most of those who have lost the old landmarks must find their way back to faith. And even if this were not so, Christianity, judged on its merits, as recent study of comparative religion has helped us to know it, is the religion which, of all existing religions, touches the widest circle of interests and has gathered into itself the most diverse streams of thought. Whatever one's antecedents or background, if one wishes to come to grips with living religion one can make no mistake by beginning with Jesus.

Yet one who desires to do this finds it far from easy. Christians differ both as to the facts to be explained and as to the explanation to be given to them, and these differences are reflected in differing creeds and theologies, each of which is presented as the truth.

There is, however, one test which, if consistently applied, would greatly simplify matters. It is the test

of practice. How do the beliefs professed affect the lives of those who profess them? How many of them make a difference in their conduct? How many are simply taken over without testing as part of the legacy of the past? When we have determined this we shall have separated the faith that is alive from the changing dress of theory and of dogma in which from time to time the specialists have clothed it. It may be that when we have done this we shall discover that the differences which separate us are less insurmountable than we had supposed; our agreements more significant than appeared at first sight. Certainly, that is what we should expect of a religion which traces its origin to Jesus, the prophet-poet whom his enemies reproached for his lack of learning, but whom the common people heard gladly. At least the attempt is worth making.

When one thinks of the wide diversity of belief among thoughtful people, and the still wider diversity of temperament, of education, and of environment which helps to explain and to perpetuate it, one might well despair of attempting any statement which would be generally acceptable. In this perplexity I have reassured myself by reflecting that these many differing personalities are, after all, human beings. The needs each one of us feels others have felt also. The questions any one of us asks others will ask also. Since it is the same reality with which we all have to do, there must be some experiences which we all share; some basic convictions which we hold in common. It is of these common experiences and convictions that I would write, in the hope that some readers will be found who will recognize in what I have written the expression of their own faith and the interpretation of their own life history.

It would be a hopeless task to attempt any ade-

quate expression of my obligations to the many who have helped me to formulate the convictions of which this book is the record. They extend over many years and are of many kinds. To my colleagues in the Seminary and in the University I owe much; to discussion with my students in the classroom still more; most of all to the many, men and women, with whom I have worked shoulder to shoulder in the effort to translate belief into life. To one especially, whose penetrating criticism, quick to detect the first note of unreality, has been a constant stimulus for more than thirty-five years, I owe more than it would be fitting, even if it were possible, for me to express.

William Adams Brown.

Union Theological Seminary, 1928.

I wish to express my special obligation to my colleague, President Henry Sloan Coffin, D.D., of the Union Theological Seminary, who has found time, in his busy life, to read the manuscript; and to my assistants and former students, Reverend Henry Pitney Van Dusen and Reverend John C. Bennett, who have helped me with the proof and in the preparation of the bibliography.

W. A. B.

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PART I. INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

Why Religion Cannot Dispense with Belief

1. The Experiment of a Creedless Religion.

   How the Scientific Spirit Has Affected Religious Belief—Attempts to Justify a Creedless Religion.

2. Why Our Beliefs Matter.

   Why Our Beliefs Matter to Ourselves—Why Our Beliefs Matter to Other People.

3. The Reviving Interest in Theology.

   Recent Evidences of a Reviving Interest in Theology—Fundamentalism and Anglo-Catholicism as Reaffirmations of the Importance of Right Belief for Religion—The Personal Element in Religious Belief.

In many quarters we find evidences of a reviving interest in questions of belief. In the church this appears in movements like Fundamentalism and Anglo-Catholicism, which emphasize the importance of right thinking in religion. Outside the church it appears in the increased market for books which deal with the more serious aspects of religion. Theology, it appears, is coming to its own again. The importance of theology consists in the fact that it helps us to define the beliefs which make a difference for life. Religious convictions are of all our beliefs the most personal and intimate, and the Christian faith is, of all faiths, the one best worth studying because of the variety and richness of the lives by which it has been tested.

1. The Experiment of a Creedless Religion

How the Scientific Spirit Has Affected Religious Belief

The generation that is drawing to a close has been trying on an unprecedented scale the experiment of a creedless religion. It is, to be sure, not the first time that the experiment has been tried. There have been periods in the history of religion when custom rather than definite belief has been the bond of union, and there are religious people to-day for whom this is still true. But these creedless people, for the most part, have not yet begun to think about religion. The present experiment differs from its predecessors because those who engage in it have already had creeds and rejected them. They are living without fixed beliefs, not because they would not like to believe if they could, but because they have not found a creed which seems to them credible.

The causes which have brought about this sceptical attitude are of many different kinds, some personal and individual, others growing out of the general conditions of the time. The agnosticism of some is due to their reaction against a creed taught to them in their youth; others have honestly, but unsuccessfully, tried to reach secure footing in the maze of contemporary opinion about religion. A major cause is the spread of the scientific spirit, which has led men to question fixed beliefs and to base conviction upon experiment rather than upon authority.

In the fields of physics and chemistry, and to a less extent in those of biology and psychology, the use of the experimental method has achieved notable results. It has marvellously increased our power over nature

and over man. It has placed resources in our hands which we can use both for our own personal enjoyment and advantage and for that of others. Through the use of these new powers we are able to deal effectively with social ills, like poverty and disease, which seemed to a prescientific age a part of the natural order of the world, like the seasons and the tides. And there is apparently no limit to the material resources which science may still provide for us.

But when we leave the field of practice and turn to that of thought the limitations of the scientific method become apparent. Scientists can tell us much that is interesting and important of the way things happen, much of what we can do to control their happening. But why the world is such a world that they happen thus, and not otherwise, and what the happening means for human life, they cannot tell us. Their discoveries have led us to question many of our older beliefs. They have, as yet, given us no clear-cut and satisfying philosophy of life to put in their place. So the questioning habit, which is an integral part of the technic of science, has insensibly become for many of our contemporaries their dominant attitude toward life as a whole.

Attempts to Justify a Creedless Religion

At first this shifting from the attitude of belief to the attitude of scepticism took place more or less unconsciously. So far as the questioners realized what was happening to them, they regretted the change. But there has arisen a school of philosophers which attempts to justify it. Far from being a loss, the abandonment of fixed beliefs in religion seems to them a gain. For thought, they tell us, exists not for its own sake as a guide to ultimate truth, but as an *instrument* for enabling us to deal practically with existing conflicts in our lives. Professor Dewey, who

is the most distinguished representative of this type of thinking, has no place in his view of the world for the absolute standards of the older faiths. He bids us live for to-day, or at most for to-morrow. For no man can predict what will come thereafter. Each new situation must be met with such fresh wisdom as the new experience may provide. Our present care should be to keep our minds open and to avoid commitments which might limit our future freedom.

Not long ago a well-known teacher gave a talk to some theological students about religion. In it he said many practical and helpful things; but he said one thing which, if they had taken him at his word, would at once have put an end to their theological studies. He told them—and he was quite serious in doing so—that belief is negligible in matters of religion. Religion, he said, is a certain attitude of the spirit, an emotional mood which is compatible with every conceivable belief; and whether we choose one theology or another, or dispense with theology altogether, is, so far as the social effects of the choice are concerned, a matter of indifference. In saying this, he was only putting into words a view held, more or less consciously, by many people.[1]

What is significant about this attitude is not the fact that it exists, but that it is shared by so many professedly religious people. Among our contemporaries there are persons who assure us that they can be religious without believing in God and Christians without accepting any doctrine of the Christian faith.

A professor of theology in one of our leading universities has recently written a book in which he tells us what the future religion of thoughtful people is likely to be.[2] In this religion one looks in vain for a

[1] *Cf.* Huxley, Julian S., *Religion Without Revelation* (New York and London, 1927).

[2] Lake, Kirsopp: *The Religion of Yesterday and of To-morrow* (New York, 1925).

personal God to whom to pray, or a sinless Jesus to whom to give his loyalty. Jesus was a prophet, indeed, we are told, but it does not follow that all that he taught was true. With prophets it is the energy of conviction that counts, not its truth.[1] Sin is ignored and with it the necessity for atonement. Nothing is said of immortality. Whether there is to be a church or no in the religion of the future, no one can tell.[2] Yet, with a curious inconsistency, after the old beliefs are gone, Professor Lake would have us retain the creeds which express them. While they may no longer command his intellectual assent, they make an emotional appeal which justifies him in desiring to continue their use in worship. So far have we gone from the clear-cut religion of our fathers.

2. Why Our Beliefs Matter

Why Our Beliefs Matter to Ourselves

Two substitutes have been proposed for our lost religious beliefs: One is appreciation and the other is activity. For persons of contemplative nature, the enjoyment of beauty in nature or art is offered as a substitute. When we hear a great orchestra play a symphony by Beethoven or when we enter the Bay of Naples on a cloudless spring morning, we are troubled by no haunting questions of whence or why. Persons of a mystical temperament may find satisfaction in solitary worship, or in the elaborate ritual of a great cathedral. God can draw near to us through other avenues than that of the mind and can make his presence felt when it cannot be explained.

Many modern men, however, find activity more attractive than contemplation. Whatever may be true

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 153: "The difference between the ordinary man and the prophet is not that between truth and error, but between energy and inaction."

[2] P. 164.

of God, man at least is familiar and accessible. We know what he needs and what we can do for him. It is natural, therefore, that a questioning generation should turn its energies into channels of practical helpfulness and find in a hundred different forms of effort for human betterment a substitute for the upward look.

High hopes were entertained for this new gospel of social service and for a time the life of helpfulness seemed to afford all that was needed. To-day we are not so confident that love of man is enough. The old questions as to life's meaning and man's destiny are beginning again to make themselves heard.

It will be in order, therefore, before taking up the particular beliefs with which this book is concerned to inquire how far the attempts to dispensé with religious belief altogether are likely to prove successful. This at least may be said that thus far the results of the experiment have not been wholly satisfactory. Judged from the point of view of practice alone, a religion without definite belief leaves much to be desired. Activity, to be effective, must spring from conviction. Otherwise, lacking motive and sanction, it becomes aimless and leads nowhere.

This is particularly true of social activity, since for this many minds must be unified and many wills concentrated on a single aim. The social programmes offered to-day as substitutes for historic Christianity lead us inevitably to more ultimate questions. Familiar and accessible as he seems at first sight, man proves, on examination, almost as many-sided and perplexing as his Maker. It is all very well to propose social service as a unifying platform; but what form shall social service take and to what aim shall it be directed? These questions bring to light differences of conviction which reach down to the roots of human activity.

There are two social movements in our day which call forth a loyalty which is, in many respects, like that inspired by the great religions. One of these is the Soviet movement in Russia; the other the Fascist movement in Italy. Each of these movements is committed to certain definite convictions. In these convictions its adherents find a motive for activity and a justification for sacrifice. The success and continued influence of neither movement can be adequately accounted for by adventitious causes like personal ambition or deliberate deceit. To do so would be to overlook the central fact of the situation—a large body of men and women holding definite beliefs, which they propagate with enthusiasm and for which they are willing to make sacrifices. If we suppose that we can overcome such influences with machine-guns and battleships, we ignore the plain teachings of history. Only conviction can displace conviction. To conquer an existing belief we must replace it with one more convincing.

The need of definite belief becomes still more apparent when we consider our attitude to the existing institutions of religion. However it came to be, the church is here—a fact to be reckoned with by every one who wishes to understand the social forces of our age. And the church that is here is a church with a creed. Make as much as we will of the differences between the denominations, the fact remains that organized Christianity in all its forms, Protestant and Catholic, stands for certain great convictions about the nature of the world and the meaning of life which are now being taught to children and preached to adults in thousands and tens of thousands of churches. If these convictions are mistaken, they ought to be corrected. If the church is doing harm, it ought to be opposed. But conviction can be fought only by conviction, and a belief that is false must be

replaced by a belief that is true. To ignore error is the coward's refuge. To treat belief as negligible is to shut our eyes to the facts.

But there is a deeper and more compelling reason why we cannot surrender our religious beliefs, and this reason is found in the demands of our intellectual and emotional natures. We are thinkers, as well as actors. If we are to be inwardly at peace, our thoughts must be harmonious. There are conflicts in ourselves, as well as in the world we live in; conflicts of interest, conflicts of belief. The forces which have divided men into schools and churches are at work in us, and, unless we can subordinate them to some unifying principle, will work havoc in our lives.

The effect of a creedless religion upon the emotions is still more unsatisfactory. Undirected to an object, feeling is empty and soon grows monotonous. Even mystical religion requires a belief about the reality with which we commune. The great mystics had definite convictions, even if they could not find language in which to explain them. We have seen that if we are to justify our continuance in the life of service we must perceive something in man that makes him worth serving. It is even more true that if we are to make the worship of God our supreme business we must know what there is in God which makes him worshipful.

One suspects that the professor who told his students that belief is negligible in matters of religion had in mind some particular belief which he himself no longer holds, and that his reason for making his negation so sweeping was that he had as yet found no satisfactory substitute to put in its place.

Why Our Beliefs Matter to Other People

But though some professors can live happily without any religious belief, many of the young men and

women whom they teach cannot. They are faced with the necessity for definite decisions as to what to do with life. To make these decisions wisely, they need to know more than the technic of competing professions or their monetary rewards. They need to know what life is for and what are its most enduring satisfactions. They need to know whether pleasure is the ultimate test or whether there are more objective standards. They need to know whether man is the last word in nature or whether there is a God to whom he can confidently look up for guidance. These are not theoretical questions; they have a direct bearing upon life. They make a difference; sometimes they make all the difference in what we do.

While visiting the Sea of Galilee with a friend many years ago, we were overtaken by the torrid wind which the natives call the Sirocco. My companion was prostrated by the heat and I was at my wit's end with anxiety. The nearest inn was full and had no proper place in which to care for a sick person. But it chanced that at Tiberias there was a Christian mission of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, with its hospital and its parsonage. In an incredibly short time the invalid was reposing in a comfortable bed, in a cool room, with the best of attendance from a doctor and a trained nurse. The doctor and the nurse were there rather than in Edinburgh or in Dundee because they had believed that Jesus' words to his disciples about going into all the world to heal the sick were to be taken literally, and to be applied to the suffering Jews and Arabs of Palestine as well as to their fellow countrymen in Scotland.

If a man's attitude toward religion were simply a private matter, we might be content to take it as it comes without concerning ourselves about it very seriously. But, as the sociologists are reminding us, religion is of social as well as of individual consequence.

It may begin in emotion, but it ends in deeds. Granting that the psychologists are right in emphasizing the instinctive element in religion and in reminding us that the religious emotion can be associated with widely different beliefs, it makes all the difference in the world to my neighbor with what kind of belief my particular emotion is associated. If my belief is of one kind, it may lead me to go off into the wilderness, that I may meditate on the emptiness of existence and, by suppressing all desire, fit myself for Nirvana. If it is of another kind, it may lead me to gird on a sword and go out to conquer the territory of the infidels for the glory of Allah and his prophet Mohammed. If it is of a third kind, it may lead me to seek out the most destitute and neglected of my fellow men, that I may share with them the gifts of my Father, God.

3. The Reviving Interest in Theology

Recent Evidences of a Reviving Interest in Theology

It should not, then, surprise us if, in the field of religion, belief should come into its own again. And signs are not wanting that the period of a creedless religion is drawing to a close. The large space given to religious topics in the daily newspapers and in the popular magazines is such a sign. Another sign is the increased demand for serious religious books. The fact that among recent best-sellers one is called *The Story of Philosophy*[1] and another *This Believing World*[2] would seem to show that the interest of the reading public is turning to more serious things.

Still more significant is the evidence of a new interest in questions of belief in student circles. The Student Council at Harvard recently called attention to the neglect of philosophy in modern education and requested that a course be provided, to be required of

[1] Durant, W. J. (New York, 1926).
[2] Browne, L. (New York, 1927).

all students, which should survey the chief answers which have been given to man's questions concerning the ultimate problems of life, including the Christian answer. These young critics of education thought it both surprising and mortifying that, in a country whose ideals have been largely determined by the Christian religion, young men should be launched upon the sea of life with a pilot's license from their Alma Mater, without even an elementary knowledge of what some of the greatest minds of all ages have thought about God and human destiny.[1]

From a number of important books which have recently appeared on religious subjects, we may select two which illustrate the direction in which contemporary thought is tending. The first is Rudolph Otto's *Idea of the Holy*,[2] a book which, in spite of its technical language and limited theme, has gone through many editions in Germany and has found many readers in its English translation. In this book, Professor Otto calls attention to the part played by the sense of mystery in the religious experience and tries to define the qualities which differentiate the object of worship from all other realities with which man has relations.

More significant still is Canon B. H. Streeter's *Reality*[3]—a book all the more notable because its author has won his way to a satisfying creed after years of personal experiment with different philosophies. In language all the more impressive because of its transparent honesty and reserve, the author tells us how he has faced, one by one, the difficulties which modern science puts in the way of Christian faith and come at last to the conviction that in the

[1] Report of the Harvard Student Council Committee on Education. Reprinted from *The Harvard Advocate* for April, 1926, pp. 34, 35.

[2] 1917; Eng. tr. by Harvey (Oxford, 1923).

[3] New York, 1926.

central verities of that faith, as they have been tested by centuries of Christian experience, we have the most adequate account of the real world in which we live. A conviction so tested by experience invites serious consideration and it is reassuring to learn that the author is finding many to follow him in his upward climb to faith.

Fundamentalism and Anglo-Catholicism as Reaffirmations of the Importance of Right Belief for Religion

Recent movements in the churches witness to a deepening interest in belief. Fundamentalism is such a movement. As the name implies, this is an attempt to recall the churches to certain basic beliefs or fundamentals which the Fundamentalist is convinced are essential to the maintenance of a vital Christianity. The strength of the movement, in spite of its uncritical and reactionary character, is an impressive demonstration of the place held by belief in the religious life of large numbers of earnest people in the different churches and of the futility of any attempt to secure practical unity among Christians that does not frankly face the problem of differences of belief.

Equally significant as a reaffirmation of the importance of right belief for religion is the Anglo-Catholic movement. In spite of the fact that it challenges conventional Protestantism at the points at which it has been surest of itself, this movement is showing surprising vitality and is winning many adherents among cultivated people. While to a superficial view it appears to be chiefly concerned with matters of ritual and to make its appeal to the æsthetic sense rather than to the reason, it will be found on closer examination that its motive power is drawn from a definite philosophy of life. The Anglo-Catholic, no less than the Fundamentalist, makes right be-

lief essential to vital piety and, therefore, attributes great importance to the teaching function of the church. Both movements, widely as they differ in other respects, insist upon the necessity of a definite creed and stress the influence of belief on conduct.

We are not considering now what attitude we ought to take toward these movements. They interest us here as fresh evidences of the perennial vitality of the will to believe. Fundamentalism and Anglo-Catholicism are not products of an uncritical age. They are passionate reaffirmations of older beliefs which have been challenged by criticism. The interest which inspires them is not simply intellectual but moral and religious, the desire to safeguard convictions which those who hold them believe to be of fundamental importance for human welfare. They illustrate in an impressive manner the intimate connection between religious belief and life.

The Personal Element in Religious Belief

For religion, we must never forget, is always a personal matter. It is the way we relate ourselves practically to whatever in the universe is ultimate for us. In this enterprise every part of our nature is concerned. We may approach the ultimate by many roads; by that of philosophy, for example, or by that of art, or by that of conduct. But each of these approaches is partial and the result to which it leads is incomplete. When we philosophize, the mind is active. When we contemplate beautiful things, our emotions are stirred. When we take duty seriously, we find that we must act. But in religion, thought, emotion, and conduct, are all involved. Religion, alone, attempts to unify *all of life;* to give each aspect of our many-sided nature its enduring satisfaction.

Until we understand this, we cannot even begin to think helpfully about religion. Religion is not only

guardian, but pioneer. It has been well described as the "enterprise of so conducting the whole of human life as to catch whatever winds and tides there be which may carry human living to its largest possibilities."[1]

In the fine words of Professor Wieman:

> "Religion is the undying fire of human aspiration. Its flare searched the Great Dark before our little lamps of culture were ever invented. The monstrous shapes and ghastly figures that seemed to hover where the wild light fought the dark in those early days of savagery have been driven back by the steady, even light of modern culture. But out beyond the illumination of our craft and knowledge there still streams the glare of this quenchless flame of religious aspiration, searching amid vague shapes and shadows for those further possibilities which all Being has to offer. There is no questing in all human life so valiant, so heroic and adventurous as religion."[2]

Much of the popular prejudice against theology is due to the separation of our beliefs about God from this personal adventurous appeal. Religious doctrines have been treated as scientific propositions to be tested by the mechanism of the classroom and the laboratory. The loves and fears, the aspirations and hopes, of the men and women who are to do the testing have been treated as negligible, often as disturbing elements.

But love and fear, aspiration and hope, cannot be eliminated from religious conviction without destroying its distinctive quality. In the realm of values and ideals where religion has its home, quality rather than quantity is the determining factor. While the scientist seeks, as far as possible, to eliminate the personal element from his apprehension of truth, the religious man emphasizes it in the highest possible

[1] Wieman, H. N., *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth* (New York, 1927), p. 141.
[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 141, 142.

degree. The convictions of religious people are not abstract beliefs that can be divorced from their relation to the individuals who hold them. They are conclusions to which one is constrained by his personal experience and must be tested and retested by it.[1]

This does not mean that our belief is to be vague and indefinite; only that it should be conformed to the object with which it deals. In formulating religious convictions we must use language which suggests the life of change and growth in which religion moves and make place for the emotions it calls forth, as well as the ideas to which it gives rise.

There are persons to whom such a view of Christian belief is intolerable. If they are to have beliefs at all, they must be clear-cut and definite, admitting no possibility of misunderstanding or mistake. A creed, as they see it, is something once for all, something you take or leave. The Fundamentalist takes the creed; the radical rejects it. In their conception of what a creed should be, they agree.

But there are many persons—and I believe an increasing number—who are neither Fundamentalists nor radicals. They have convictions which they have not yet clearly formulated, and sympathies which find no adequate channel of expression. Some of them are still in the church; others have broken with historic Christianity. Yet they feel within themselves the same needs that the first Christians felt and are played upon by influences similar to those in which

[1] In this testing other methods must be used than those of the exact sciences. In his suggestive book, already referred to, Canon Streeter has reminded us that there are two possible ways of apprehending the universe: the method of science and the method of art. Science makes diagrams of reality. Art gives us pictures. Theology, if it is to deal adequately with its subject-matter, must make use of the latter. In the description of the relation between persons, mechanical formulæ break down, and personal relationships are the very life-breath of religion. *Cf.* p. 31.

historic Christianity had its rise. After all the centuries, they still feel the spell of Jesus and wonder whether he may not have some word for them which they will do well to heed. For them this book is written.

PART II. MAN AND THE WORLD

CHAPTER II

The Christian: or What to Believe About Oneself

1. Where to Begin.

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Jesus tells us that we are potential children of God and, therefore, members of one family. He tells us further that we realize our true selves through the surrender of our wills to the will of God. In contrast to the Buddhist ideal, in which man realizes his true destiny by suppressing all desire, even the desire for personal fulfilment, Jesus emphasizes the value of human personality. In contrast with the more common Western ideal, which identifies freedom with self-assertion, Jesus teaches that we win true freedom through the surrender of our wills to the will of God. Stripped of its figurative language, Jesus' way of realizing freedom anticipates in a surprising way the teachings of many modern psychologists. The self, as they analyze it for us, is a bundle of competing elements which require, for their unity, to be subordinated to a single dominating ideal. Such an ideal Christian faith finds in God, as Jesus has taught us to see him. In loyalty to him and devotion to his cause we may find scope for all our powers and satisfaction for all our desires.

1. Where to Begin

How Religious Belief Differs from Belief in General

We are to study one by one the convictions that together make up the Christian's faith; what Christians believe about God and about man, about sin and about salvation, about Christ and about immortality, about the Bible, and about the church. We are interested in these beliefs primarily as personal convictions which affect conduct and help to determine destiny, not simply as intellectual propositions to be studied for their own sakes. Through long reaches of history man's inner life has been sustained by belief in spiritual realities corresponding to his deepest needs. These beliefs deal with a wide variety of subjects; the world we live in and the self that lives in it; the unseen Spirit from whom life came and the unknown future toward which it is moving; the fact of evil with its heart-break and tragedy; the fact of death with its unsolved mystery; above all, the new hope that has come to man through the life, the death, and the continuing influence of Jesus Christ. Both the needs and the satisfactions persist through the changing centuries, but each age has its own emphasis and its own vocabulary; each makes its own discovery of spiritual reality and reports what it has found in its own way.

The needs with which these persistent beliefs are concerned are as varied as life itself; the need of liberty and the need of security; the need of guidance and the need of leadership; the need of forgiveness and the need of comradeship; the need of fulfilment and the need of happiness.

All these needs find their satisfaction in our common life, but in differing ways and in varying degree. There is always something that is still wanting—a sense of incompleteness from which we cannot escape. It is with this baffling and unmanageable element in experience that religion has to do. Where other helpers fail, it comes to our rescue; and when they have done their utmost, its work begins.

There is, to be sure, nothing in the mere fact of need which of itself guarantees fulfilment. But when we are confronted with persistent needs, making their presence felt from generation to generation, it is natural to conclude that they have more than individual significance. They point to something basic in the structure of the universe and are rightly believed to give trustworthy information about the nature of things.

The Place of Faith in Religion

Religion meets these deepest and most insatiable of our needs by introducing us to the life of faith. Faith is the name that we give to those central and unifying beliefs to which we are constrained by that which is deepest and most fundamental in ourselves. It is the intuition of the whole which gives unity and meaning to the parts. Faith is the bridge by which we pass over from the world of desire to the world of attainment. It shows us in this present workaday life a reality answering to our ideals; it delivers from the conflict in ourselves when no other escape is possible. Through faith in God we rise above the limits of our finiteness and realize our destiny as self-conscious and self-determining beings. We surrender to a master, whose service is perfect freedom.

This intimate connection between religious belief and individual experience has its inconveniences. Where personal interests are at stake it is easy to let

prejudice blind us to the facts and to substitute what we would like to have true for what is true. But on the other hand, the practical nature of the issues helps to keep interest alive where it might otherwise flag and points us to sources of knowledge which might otherwise be overlooked. Besides the outer world of motion and form and number that can be mapped and weighed and measured there is an inner realm of values and ideals to which religion gives access. In this inner world, none the less real because unseen, faith is not simply discoverer, but creator. It not only shows us what is; it helps us to create what is to be.

In the chapters that follow, we shall be interested primarily in the Christian's faith. We shall study the convictions about God and man, sin and salvation, duty and destiny, to which we are led when we take Jesus for our guide and find in him the answer to our ultimate questions concerning the meaning of life and the nature of things.[1]

Where, then, shall we begin? In the life of faith there is no single prescribed path. We may start at more than one place and still reach the goal. Since, however, we are free to choose as we like, the nearer home we begin, the better. We are to study a great many interesting and important subjects. Let us begin by asking what Jesus has to tell us about ourselves.

[1] The question how far Christianity is identical with the religion of Jesus, how far it includes elements not present in his teaching is important, and we shall recur to it in later chapters. But even though it should appear that a knowledge of the later development is essential for a full understanding of Christianity, we shall make no mistake by beginning our study with Jesus' own teaching. The higher our view of Jesus, the more confident we are that the church has been right in making him object as well as standard of its faith, the more important will it be for us to know what Jesus himself taught.

2. How Jesus Would Have Us Think of Ourselves

What Jesus Tells Us About Ourselves

What Jesus has to tell about ourselves may be summed up in four sentences. He tells us that we are potential children of God, meant for his fellowship and privileged to share in his work. He tells us that we are members of one family, meant to live as brothers and to express our brotherhood in helpfulness. He tells us that the way to realize our sonship and brotherhood is to surrender our wills to the will of our heavenly Father, whose wise and loving purpose he came to make known. He tells us, finally, that the result of this surrender will be to free us from the obstacles and limitations which now hamper and thwart us—both the outward obstacles which others put in our way and the inward limitations which we find in ourselves.

We are so familiar with this teaching of Jesus that we fail to realize its revolutionary character. To appreciate this fully, we should have to forget all that the intervening centuries have brought and live ourselves back into the world in which Jesus lived, a world in which slavery was an accepted institution and personal freedom, as we understand it to-day, was the prerogative of the few. Jesus was not the first, by any means, to conceive a spiritual ideal for man; but he was the first to universalize it. "Plato," says Adolf Harnack, "had already sung the great hymn of the mind. But the mind which he meant was the knowing mind; . . . his message made its appeal to the wise . . . Jesus Christ was the first to bring the value of every human soul to light; and what he did no one can . . . undo."[1]

[1] *What Is Christianity?* Eng. tr. by Saunders (New York, 1901), p. 73.

The full force of Jesus' teaching is further veiled from us by the figurative language in which it is expressed. Jesus speaks in pictures, like the poet or the prophet, not in abstract terms, like the scientist or the philosopher. The figure of the child recurs again and again in his teaching. He calls God "Father" and would have us think of ourselves as God's sons and daughters, who need not ask him for any good thing, because he knows our necessities before we tell him of them and is more ready to give to us than we are to our children.[1] He pictures the ideal society, to whose coming he bids us look forward, as a family in which each loves his neighbor as himself, and he who serves most is honored as the greatest.[2] He tells us that when the childlike attitude is lacking, even God cannot do anything for us. Unless we change our habits and become as little children, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.[3]

Yet these figures, simple and familiar as they are, are but the outward dress of conceptions as definite and profound as those of any philosopher. When Jesus calls God "Father," he teaches us that the unseen reality on whom we depend—that mysterious Unknown after which the imagination of man has reached out in every age—is in some true sense akin to us, and that it is, therefore, reasonable for us to address our prayer to God, with confidence that we shall be heard and understood. When he speaks of men as brothers, he reminds us of the spiritual capacities in men which transcend all barriers of race or class; those common ideals and aspirations outlasting the changes of the years, which make mankind essentially one. When he tells us that we must become as little children if we would enter the Kingdom of Heaven, he warns us against the isolation

[1] Matt. 6:8; 7:11. [2] Matt. 19:19; 20:27.
[3] Matt. 18:3.

which pride always brings and reminds us that humility is not only the key to knowledge, but the condition of all true fellowship.

What This Teaching Means for Men of To-day

This teaching of the Master, simple as it seems, has far-reaching practical consequences. If God is our Father and we his children, then the world in which we are living is not only God's world but our world. As the place he has prepared for the training of his children, it contains all things necessary for that training. Why, then, should we be anxious and worried about the future?[1] Our Father who knows our needs will furnish what is needful for our welfare and growth, provided we put his work first and give ourselves whole-heartedly to his service.[2]

But there is a condition which goes with the promise. If we are to receive, we must give. We are called to be children of God, but to realize our privileges as children, we must accept the responsibilities that go with sonship. To be a son as Jesus understood sonship, a man must surrender his will to the will of his heavenly Father. He must make God's purpose his purpose and God's work his work. Only so can he enjoy the fellowship of his love and share the privilege of being his fellow worker.

This demand for unqualified commitment sets the standard for Jesus' judgment of men. It divides men into two classes—those who have made the commitment and those who have not. To Jesus the sin of sins was insistence on one's own will; and the way to be delivered from sin was to yield oneself to God in complete surrender. All other sins, whether they are sins of sense or sins of the mind, the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eye, or the pride of life, are only forms of this basic and all-inclusive sin. "Whosoever

[1] Matt. 6:34. [2] Matt. 6:33.

would save his life," says Jesus, "shall lose it."[1] And he adds, with poignant irony, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own self?"[2]

But surrender is not Jesus' last word. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it." But it is no less true that he who loses his life for Jesus' sake and the gospel's shall find it. The life to which Jesus invites is not narrow and limiting. It is a life of freedom and happiness; a life of self-realization and of self-expression. For those who trust the Father, there is no reason for anxiety. To those who live for the Kingdom, all good things shall be added.[3]

Many perplexing questions are raised by this teaching of Jesus; questions concerning the structure of the world we live in and the nature of God, who controls it. We shall consider some of these questions in later chapters. We will think now only of its bearing upon our personal lives. Two points especially require further attention, the freedom Jesus promises and the surrender he requires.

3. Jesus' Ideal for Man in Contrast to Other Ideals

How Science Is Removing the External Obstacles to Freedom

Among the needs which give birth to religion, two are of paramount importance, the need for security and the need for liberty. Each corresponds to a fundamental aspect of the religious life. As dependent beings, we need protection from the dangers which beset us; as responsible beings, we need scope for the exercise of our powers. These needs recur from age to age, but in different form and with different emphasis. Now security is felt as the great need; now

[1] Luke 9:24. [2] Luke 9:25. [3] Matt. 6:33.

liberty seems all-important; but neither alone is sufficient without the other.[1]

To-day we care more about liberty than about security. If we must choose, we would rather be free than be safe. Accepted standards are called in question, ancient customs abandoned, that the free spirit may have its way. Science and democracy, the characteristic expressions of the modern attitude toward life, are both expressions of the spirit of freedom. Science is freedom in the realm of the mind; democracy in that of the emotions and of the will. In politics, indeed, it looks as if the crest of the wave had been reached and reaction had begun to set in. In education, however, the tide is still in full flow. Self-expression is the great word. The pupil is encouraged to do what he likes and to study only what interests him.

So far as the outward life is concerned, we have made great progress in our struggle for freedom. Science, which has increased our power in so many ways, has lessened, and in many cases altogether removed, the material obstacles which formerly limited man's freedom; and corresponding changes in industry and politics have made it possible for the many to share in the gains thus won. The abolition of slavery, the extension of the suffrage, the shortening of the hours of labor, the acceptance of the principle of the living wage, the extension of education to all classes of the people; these are but a few of many examples that could be cited. There can be no

[1] The word "liberty" is used in two senses: Now as the power to choose, which every one of us is conscious of possessing within the limits set for him by his outward environment and his own nature; now of a particular philosophical theory of the nature of that power, namely, that which makes the human will a true first cause possessing what is often called power to the contrary. The two views are often, but not necessarily identified. In what follows we shall be concerned primarily with the first of these two meanings, but before we are through we shall have occasion to consider the other also.

doubt that as a result of these changes human liberty has greatly increased and opportunities have been afforded the individual for self-development of unprecedented extent. Already, however, we are beginning to recognize the limits of what can be done in this way. Freedom, we are coming to see, does not necessarily mean unity. Interests divide man and the conflict of interests sets up new obstacles which lead to the limitation of freedom as fast as it is won. While our age is an age of unprecedented liberty, it is also an age that has seen more laws passed than any that has preceded it. Some countries have already found democratic methods too loose and cumbrous for their taste, and are taking a shorter cut to the desired goal. Both in Italy and in Russia autocracy is praised as the ideal form of government, or at least as an indispensable instrument in training men for freedom.

Obstacles to Freedom Within Man Himself

But the chief obstacle to freedom is not the differences between individuals. It is the still deeper differences within the individual. In each one of us is a group of warring impulses, between which we find it almost impossible to keep the peace. It is not simply selfishness and altruism that are at war within us. Different kinds of selfishness struggle for the mastery, and different kinds of altruism. Shall we choose money, or pleasure; knowledge, or fame? Shall we work for our family, or for our country, or for mankind? These inner limitations to the life of freedom are quite as formidable as those which grow out of the external environment. What we need is not simply a new environment, but a new self.

Our need of inward liberty is accentuated by the breakdown of external authority. As long as there is some one else to tell me what I must do, my lack of

inner unity may remain hidden from me. But when external restraint is removed and I am free to do as I please, the hidden weaknesses of my character are brought to light. It is not strange, then, that in the church, as well as in the state, we should see signs of a revival of external authority. The Roman Catholic Church was never stronger and more self-conscious; and in non-Roman circles, as we have seen, the desire to be relieved of the responsibility of ultimate decision is finding expression in movements as diverse as Fundamentalism and Anglo-Catholicism.

How the Question of Individual Freedom Arises

The problem of winning inward freedom meets us first of all in our own individual lives. Only later do we come to see its larger aspects as it affects all human beings. It meets us as a personal problem most frequently and most acutely in connection with the phenomena of adolescence. Sooner or later every growing boy or girl must decide whether he is to become an independent personality, with responsibilities and opportunities of his own, or whether he will be content to remain a parasite, living on others.

The question meets us in the family. Shall we be content to let our parents support us and live on the property they have accumulated, or shall we make our own place and earn our own living? It meets us in our business. Shall we accept, without question, the standards which are set for us by our associates—the standards of contemporary commercial or industrial practice—or shall we look the facts in the face for ourselves and work out a business ethic of our own? The student meets this question in the classroom; the hostess meets it when she plans her programme of social hospitality; the worshipper meets it when he goes to church. Wherever we turn we face

the same alternative of conformity or independence. Shall we take over prevailing views and adapt ourselves to prevailing customs, or shall we reach out into the unknown and try to establish direct relations with the unseen reality on which we are dependent? Shall we be consumers merely, taking what is given us, without giving back anything in return; or is it in us to do something individual, whether with brush, or hand, or pen, something that will have meaning and beauty and inner unity; something that will live on after us as the source of similar creative activity in others? To be free, in the sense in which we are using the term here, means to be a creator, one who sees something new and is able to give it expression in a form that will last.[1]

To most of us, I repeat, the question comes in a very practical form, and most of us answer it with a "yes" or a "no," as the case may be, without realizing clearly what is happening to us. Face to face with the issue we have defined, some of us are content to drift with the tide. Others take command of the ship and steer their course to the port they themselves choose.

But once in a while the question takes a more theoretical form. How far is creative activity possible at all, and, if so, what are its conditions? Is the freedom which I seem to myself to possess real or illusory? Am I really capable of independent thought and action, or am I shut up to what has been determined for me by the past?

The Pessimist's Denial of Freedom

In 1818, just a century before the great war closed, there appeared, in Germany, a book called *The World As Will and As Idea.* Its author accepted the fatalistic view of life in its fullest implications

[1] *Cf.* Brown, W. Adams, *The Creative Experience* (New York, 1923), pp. 25 *sq.*

and drew its consequences with remorseless logic. Schopenhauer not only denied freedom to man, but to God. In spite of the appearances that delude us, there is neither reason nor meaning in the world as he sees it. The desires that spring up within us, our longings, our aspirations, and our loves, are but mirages of the desert, luring us to inevitable disappointment. In such a world there is no hope of personal fulfilment. The wise man will not desire life, but death, which alone can bring release.

More than two millenniums before Schopenhauer a greater teacher still had enunciated the same philosophy and drawn from it the same conclusion. To the Buddha, personality is not a gift to be valued, but a weakness to be overcome. The root of all evil, he teaches, is desire, and the way to peace lies not through the development of self but through its suppression. Only through the complete renunciation of everything that is distinctive of one's self can one win to the ultimate peace of Nirvana.

For most of us Westerners, the gospel of pessimism, whether in its Eastern or in its Western form, falls on deaf ears. To us, self-expression seems the one thing most to be desired and the only question we need to have answered is how we are to attain it. Is freedom something we must work out for ourselves, or must it come to us through surrender to some one who is stronger than we?

Jesus' Way of Winning Freedom Through Surrender

Jesus, as we have seen, chose the second alternative, and in so choosing comes into conflict with the prevailing tendencies of our time. To many an active, self-reliant spirit, such surrender as he requires seems the denial of freedom. If we are to have liberty, we insist, we must win it for ourselves.

Our confidence that we can do so is accentuated by

our experience in other realms. One by one our men of science have been dealing with difficulties which have baffled earlier generations, and they have conquered them. The earth has been subjected to human control, and the sea and the air. Why should man alone prove recalcitrant? Why cannot we work out our freedom scientifically by the same methods by which we have won mastery in other realms? Why turn to God for what we should do ourselves?

In sharpest contrast to this self-reliant attitude is Jesus' method of winning freedom through surrender. At first sight hopelessly out of keeping with the spirit of the age, it may prove, before we are through with it, to be less unreasonable than it seems. Indeed, we may find that it supplies the one element which, for all its scientific acumen, our modern approach has hitherto lacked.

4. The Self in the Light of the New Psychology

How Psychology Has Changed Our View of the Self

Jesus, we have seen, would have us win our freedom through surrender. So far he agrees with Schopenhauer and Buddha. But that which he would have us surrender is not the will to live, but *the will to live in our own way.* For our narrow, and often conflicting, purposes he would have us substitute a wider and more inclusive purpose, and the result of the substitution, he assures us, will be a richer and fuller personal life.

How does this teaching stand the test of modern science? To answer this question we must consult the latest of the sciences, psychology.

The effect of psychological study for some persons has been to reinforce their consciousness of personal independence. It has removed the magical and arbi-

trary elements in the older conception of personality and suggested definite methods of self-control, which have proved useful and helpful. But for others—and these not the least thoughtful—its effect has been just the opposite. It has dethroned personality from its central place in the universe and changed the self into a piece of mechanism, more complicated and intricate than the body, to be sure, but just as rigidly determined.

There are four ways in which recent psychological study has accentuated the difficulty of the believer in human freedom. All alike are the result of the application of scientific method to the phenomena of the inner life.

There is, first of all, the difficulty which is caused by the analytic method of psychology. Psychology breaks up the unity of the self into a number of different elements, impulses, emotions, sentiments, dispositions, complexes, which are themselves combinations of other simpler and still simpler elements.

There is, in the second place, the difficulty which is the result of the application of the evolutionary hypothesis to personality. Psychology reminds us that what we call the self is in process of constant change, and has become what it is through a history that antedates consciousness, and has its beginnings in the first rudiments of the physical life.

There is, in the third place, the difficulty which is caused by the intimate association which psychology has shown to obtain between our mental and our physical processes. A clot on the brain may either destroy life altogether, or so impair the normal course of development as to send the unfortunate to whom it has happened into an insane asylum. It is easy, under these circumstances, to see in matter the basic fact and to regard consciousness as a negligible by-product.

There is, finally, the difficulty felt by all determinists of reconciling our consciousness of freedom with the scientific principle of the uniformity of law.

In all this there is nothing which ought to disturb us, *provided the self which has come out of this complicated process is the self we know, and can do for us the things we want it to do.*

In one of his volumes of essays,[1] Doctor L. P. Jacks has an amusing skit in which he sends two philosophers to gamble at Monte Carlo. One is a determinist in his theory of the will, and the other is a believer in free will. But the determinist goes away with his money in his pocket, because, knowing so well that he is the slave of his environment, he jumps on the first train which will take him home; while the believer in freedom loses all that he has because he is sure that he can stop at any time. Freedom as a philosophical theory is one thing. Freedom as an immediate experience is quite another.

Our chief difficulty is not so much with the facts that psychology presents, or even with the theories by which some psychologists try to account for them, as with our emotional reaction to the way facts and theories are presented. So long as determinism remained a doctrine of the philosopher or the theologian, the practical man could pass it by. But when scientists begin to talk determinism, it is a different matter. Science has for many of our contemporaries an authority greater than that of the Pope, and before its verdict, real or supposed, they bow with an unlimited surrender. If science tells us that our actions are determined, then, they conclude, it is no longer possible for us to hold ourselves responsible for what we do. So we find them associating the new view of the self now with a doubt that inhibits action, now with an indifference that obliterates all

[1] *Among the Idol-Makers* (New York, 1912), pp. 156–178.

moral distinctions, and it is difficult to know which association has the more disastrous effect.

It must be admitted that there is a form of determinism which would justify this attitude. If, like Schopenhauer, we make everything that happens depend upon a blind unconscious fate, or, like some contemporary representatives of behavioristic psychology, deny that purpose or meaning enter into the process that determines action, we may well feel that freedom is an illusion. But if determinism is simply our way of saying that all that happens happens for a reason and that in the last analysis a wise and righteous God is in control, a very different conclusion follows.

Such was Cromwell's faith and that of the Ironsides who fought with him. Far from weakening their consciousness of freedom, the conviction that all that they did was divinely controlled stimulated them to the highest degree, and the same may be true of those who have been brought up under the new psychology.

The important thing is not what theory of the will we adopt but what practical consequences we draw from it. As a philosopher, the psychologist may hold whatever theory of the will seems to him most reasonable; as a man of science it is his function to point out how choices come about in experience and what we can do to fit ourselves to choose more wisely and more effectively. And the word that he has for us to-day is the word of the great religious teachers of all ages; that however we explain the fact, we are captains of our souls and that our choices will determine our destiny.

What Psychology Tells Us of the Way to Unify the Self

But how is the desired control to be regained and the lost consciousness of freedom won back? Here

psychology has help to give. By showing us that it is possible for us to control our emotions, it shows us how it is possible for us to become master of our choices.

One of the chief contributions of the new psychology is to our understanding of the nature and the function of our emotional life. There was a time when we thought of our emotions as beyond our control and concentrated our attention upon the life of thought. But psychologists tell us that we are mistaken in this. We cannot, to be sure, suppress our emotions, but we can direct them to new objects and so control or modify their effects. This redirection of the emotions is known in psychology as sublimation. Sublimation does not alter our capacities, but it redirects our energy and by this redirection puts a stop to the conflicts which so often inhibit our action.

For this redirection we need some new object about which the disparate elements of the self can come together. Impulses and emotions which are now in conflict, because each is directed to some object of immediate desire, must be integrated by reattachment to some larger object, worthy enough to call forth complete loyalty, and permanent enough to last. This unifying object is known as an ideal.

The difficulty with most of our ideals is that they are not large enough. They give us a momentary thrill, but in the course of time they wear out. We need some comprehensive ideal which can command our entire personality and which will outlast its rivals.

What Faith in God Contributes to the Unification of the Self

It is, however, one thing to see this necessity and quite another to discover the desired ideal. Psychologists often speak as if the unification of the self were easy, and one way of bringing it about as good as another. The fact is that it is a very difficult thing to

unify the self, and if it is to be done at all, it must be done in the right way. There are multitudes of people in whose case the desired integration simply does not happen. They are in the grip of a levelling materialism which has destroyed for them all distinctions of value and left them impotent and unhappy. If they are to be saved from themselves, some new thing must come into their lives which has the power to lift them above themselves.

This unifying ideal Jesus supplies. His remedy for the divided self is faith in God. In our Father in heaven he offers us an object large enough to embrace all sides of our personality, worthy enough to afford each part of us the satisfaction it craves, and permanent enough to last. Only submit your wills to God, he says to us, and you will find the liberty you seek.

And what he says we cannot but take seriously; for he has himself done the thing he asks us to do. When he speaks we feel a freedom and mastery which belongs only to those who have put their beliefs to the test. His character reinforces his words, and those who have followed him consistently tell us that he has done for them what he promised he would do. Through surrender to God they have won their freedom.

5. Two Ways of Winning Freedom

The Charge That Christianity Is a Religion for the Weak

Jesus' way of winning freedom, then, proves not so unreasonable after all. Let us examine it more closely to see how it works out in practice.

For one class of persons it will be readily admitted that the method of Jesus may have much to give. When you are dealing with a person of weak will or of strong passions, reliance upon divine help may

supply the added impulse which is needed. The doctors, who of all men are brought closest to cases of this kind, are beginning to discover that there is practical wisdom in the method of Jesus. There are cases of divided personality which do not readily yield to the ordinary methods of treatment, in which the help that religion gives proves an invaluable ally. To-day, as in Jesus' day, men are finding in prayer a medicine of the soul.

In his book, *The Psychology of Power*,[1] Captain J. H. Hadfield gives this record of his own experience:

"Speaking as a student of psychotherapy who, as such, has no concern with theology, I am convinced that the Christian religion is one of the most valuable and potent influences that we possess for producing that harmony and peace of mind and that confidence of soul which is needed to bring health and power to a large proportion of nervous patients. In some cases I have attempted to cure nervous patients with suggestions of quietness and confidence, but without success, until I have linked these suggestions on to that faith in the power of God which is the substance of the Christian's confidence and hope. Then the patient has become strong."

But here we meet the objection that while Jesus' method may do very well for people of sensitive conscience and weak will, it is not adapted for the normal man. No doubt, there must be a religion for the sick soul, and Jesus has shown us that he can provide it. But there are healthy-minded people who feel no need of his remedies. For them, some other method must be found.

It must be admitted that Christianity has often been presented in such a way as to lend force to this objection. Theologians have emphasized the corruption of human nature and revivalists have insisted

[1] New York, 1924, p. 51.

upon the need of a sudden and radical conversion. Little room has been left in many a picture of human life for the processes that characterize our ordinary living.

It is well, therefore, to remind ourselves that, while all the New Testament writers are at one in their description of the Christian ideal, they recognize that there is more than one way of realizing it.

Two Views of the Christian Life

In particular, there are two descriptions of the Christian life in the New Testament which are instructive both for their similarity and for their contrast. One is Jesus' teaching concerning the childlike spirit; the other, Paul's story of how he found justification through faith. Both agree that the Christian life is a life of freedom; both agree that this freedom is won by surrender. But the way the surrender is made differs.

Jesus' teaching comes to us in the form of a picture, as so many of his striking insights do. He had been talking to men about the Kingdom of God, the coming society which formed the constant theme of his preaching, and he was trying to make clear what men must do to enter this society. For one thing, they must repent of their sins. That was an obvious requirement. The prophets had insisted upon this. John the Baptist had insisted upon it. Jesus reaffirmed what they had said. But something more fundamental was needed, something at once simpler and harder, because it affected the motives which make true repentance possible. There must be a new attitude toward life, a transformation of spirit; and to make clear what this transformation was like and what it would do for men, Jesus pointed to a little child as an example of what he had in mind. The Kingdom of Heaven, he said in effect, is the society of the child-

like. Except you become like little children, you cannot hope to become part of this society.[1]

It is not hard to guess what Jesus meant by this comparison; for the note which he here strikes recurs again and again in his teaching. It is the open-mindedness of the child which attracts the Master, his simplicity and trustfulness. The child is naturally receptive to every new impression and so he learns with a facility that older people emulate in vain. If you want to be free, says Jesus, open the door of your spirit. Feel toward the unseen Father, whose protecting care encompasses you, as the normal human child feels to his earthly parent. God is your Father and you are his child. Why, then, be anxious? Give yourself up to his leading and you will be safe. Put his kingdom first, and all things needful shall be added unto you.

This note of naturalness strikes us again and again in Jesus' teaching. When we hear him talking about religion, it all seems so simple and easy. The words he uses are familiar words; the pictures by which he illustrates the life of the spirit, the homely incidents of every day—the seed thrown into the ground, the net cast into the sea, the leaven hid in the meal. He could be stern when occasion demanded; but the sin which he rebuked most unsparingly was hypocrisy, the one unpardonable offense, the officious meddling which put obstacles in the way of the sincere soul in its quest of God.[2] Jesus came to set men free—free from every barrier which kept them from God and, not least, from those which had been erected in the name of religion.

The other description of Christian freedom is given us by the Apostle Paul.[3] In his case, the desired impression is conveyed through contrast. Paul is telling

[1] Matt. 18:3. [2] Matt. 23:13. *Cf.* 18:6.
[3] Rom. 7:7–25; 8:1–12. *Cf.* Gal. 1:11–24; 2:1–21.

us how he found deliverance himself, and he explains that it was by the same method of surrender which Jesus had recommended to his disciples. But the background in his case is different. Paul had been trying to win salvation through the law, or, in other words, he had been trying to attain freedom by bringing his will into conformity with the standards of right living which his contemporaries recognized as binding. But the harder he tried, the more completely he failed; for there was something in him that did not want to conform, something which asserted its own independence over against law. For such a divided spirit, freedom was impossible; something had to be changed in Paul himself, if he was to follow his quest of righteousness with any hope of success.

The desired unification came to him through faith; and faith is only Paul's name for the complete surrender of self to a higher power, which Jesus describes as the childlike spirit. To Paul, the impulse to this surrender came through the vision of Christ on the Damascus Road, and the experience he describes has a mystical quality which we do not find in the same degree in Jesus' description of the Christian life.[1] Yet at heart the experience is the same. It is the realization of freedom through surrender to a higher will, which becomes henceforth the dominating influence of his life.

Why Jesus' View Is More Congenial to Modern Men Than That of St. Paul

St. Paul's description of the Christian life presents difficulties to the modern man that he does not feel with that of Jesus. This is due, in part, to the language Paul uses. Paul is a theologian, arguing with theologians, and he uses the language appropriate to theologians. When Jesus speaks, we listen to one

[1] *Cf.* Gal. 1:15, 16. "When it pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me."

of life's great artists using the simplest words to give expression to the profoundest insight.

But the difficulty is more than formal. It has to do with the character of the experience itself. In Paul, we have a man who had experienced a sudden and dramatic conversion, whereas, in Jesus' description of the Christian life, growth has a central place. Jesus compares the gospel to the seed that grows secretly, to the wheat that ripens to the harvest.[1] Advocates of the new education feel at home in this language. They believe in letting every one follow his natural bent. They do not seek to force the reluctant will. They sow the seed in the mind of the child and let it ripen as it will.

This is the natural result of the application of the scientific method to education. Science opens our eyes to the fact that change is always going on, in nature and in human life. To the scientist, crisis is simply the revelation in dramatic form of causes which have been at work all along. The supernatural, in the old sense of the arbitrary, the unpredictable, is at a discount in his thinking. Jesus' teaching appeals to him because of its naturalness. "Be yourself," he hears Jesus saying, "the true self that God has given you. Trust yourself, no matter where your trust may lead. Cut loose from the trammels of custom and prejudice with which tradition has surrounded you. Let the Spirit of God speak to your spirit its enfranchising word."

At first sight, it might seem as if we had here a very different conception of the Christian life from that of the Apostle Paul. Where is there place here for the radical change of nature which the Apostle experienced?

Yet, when we look more closely, we find unsuspected points of contact. The self which Jesus bids us

[1] Mark 4:26–29.

trust is the better self which we might have been if we had let God have his way with us from the first. But in very few of us has that self come to its own. Often it has been cramped and twisted and all but starved! How great the change that must take place in us before we can become what Jesus would have us! To say to Peter, with his imperious nature, "you must become as a little child," is to ask for a reversal of habits scarcely less revolutionary than that which Paul experienced. When Jesus spoke of being born again, he seemed to the wise men of his day to be describing something too difficult to be believed.[1] Yet what is strange about the second birth is not that it should occur, but that it should take place so late. Rightly understood, it is just as natural as the first birth. As it is natural for the child to enter the physical universe and develop the powers by which he may adjust himself to it, so it is natural to the childlike spirit to enter the spiritual universe and to develop the powers that are natural to it. What Jesus would have true of all of us is that we should not wait to make this discovery until after we have passed the best years of life, but that we should give ourselves up to God from the first. When Horace Bushnell, in his book *Christian Nurture*,[2] laid down the principle that we ought to expect our children to grow up Christians, he was not proposing a new way of salvation; he was recalling us to the oldest way of all.

Bernard Shaw on the Birth of the Soul

In Bernard Shaw's play *Man and Superman*,[3] there is a passage in which Tanner, the hero, describes to Ann, the heroine, the birth of his soul. It is a curious place in which to look for a commentary

[1] John 3:3, 4.
[2] Hartford, 1846.
[3] New York, 1911.

on the Gospels, but it will give us a clew which may be helpful.

The passage I have in mind comes at the point where Ann is reminding Tanner of their early experiences as boy and girl.[1] She asks him why he broke off his confidences and began to draw away as a stranger. Tanner replies that he had got something that he wanted to keep to himself, and when she presses him to know what this was he tells her that it was his soul. In the conversation that follows he goes on to show what this process of getting a soul means, and it appears that it is the discovery in one's self of a compelling principle which gives meaning and unity to the disparate elements of personality—a moral passion more powerful than all the other passions. When Ann asks him whether all passions ought not to be moral he tells her that nothing can control a passion but another stronger passion. Unless our moral sense were itself a passion mightier than all others, it would be powerless to control them. As it is, it becomes the organizing principle of life. It takes the other passions which without it are idle and aimless, "mere habits and superstitions, grotesque and ridiculous to the mature intelligence," dignifies them, and gives them conscience and meaning. It finds "them a mob of appetites and organizes them into an army of purposes and principles. My soul," he tells her, "was born of that passion."[2]

It is the description of an often repeated experience. Many of us have lived our lives unthinkingly, as a child will, yielding ourselves up to each passing impulse as it came, without conscious aim or purpose, when gradually we have become aware of something stirring within us of which as yet we had taken little account. A voice was speaking that was in us and yet not of us, and in some sudden flash of insight

[1] Pp. 34, 35. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

we have realized that it was the voice of God. All the years we thought we had been walking alone a wisdom greater than our own had been guiding us, though we knew it not. A new passion was born in us, the passion we call loyalty. In yielding ourselves completely to God, we found our true selves and for the first time became free.

This is the form which conversion takes in the normal experience. But when the wrong path has been taken and the bad habits formed, this easy and natural way is no longer possible. Then entrance upon the Christian life involves a definite break with earlier ways of living, manifesting itself often in unexpected and dramatic ways. There are memories for which the only remedy is the consciousness of the divine forgiveness, temptations which derive their all but irresistible force from the fact that they have been yielded to so often in the past. There is only one way to deal with a situation like this, and it is to face right about.

Such a radical transformation took place in Paul's experience. He had thought of God as a stern Master laying upon him a task which was greater than his strength. He now saw that he was a compassionate Saviour, inviting him to share a richer and fuller life. In accepting this gracious invitation, Paul's thoughts were turned away from himself to God. A new passion was born in him, the passion to carry to others the good news of the loving God, to whom his whole nature now went out in willing surrender; and in this new passion he found the organizing principle of his life. The old appetites and instincts were still there, but now they had become servants instead of masters. In the joy of the new service to which he had dedicated himself, his former desire for self-righteousness was forgotten. In sharing with others the insight he had received through Christ, he had found freedom and peace.

The contrast between these two types of experience is familiar to every minister. In every congregation you will find people who seem to grow up normally into the Christian life, people whom William James described as "healthy-minded" or "once born."[1] And you will find others whose experience has been a perpetual struggle with temptation, people who are acutely conscious of their weakness and need of help. It is foolish to try to force persons of these different types into a single mould. Each must find his way to God by the path that is natural to him: healthy-minded people by the straight path of obedience and loyalty; the twice-born by a radical conversion in which the consciousness of forgiven sin will hold the central place. But in each case the goal must be the same—a life of inner freedom and self-mastery. And in each the test must be the same—a life completely surrendered to God as he is revealed in Jesus Christ.

A life completely surrendered to God: this is what is lacking in Bernard Shaw's otherwise admirable account of the birth of the soul. As psychology, it is beyond criticism. As drama, it is Hamlet with Hamlet left out. Moral passion does not come of itself. It requires an object to call it forth. You cannot love in general. You must love some one or some thing in particular. The object that called forth in Paul his unifying moral passion was the God who was like Christ. If we desire a like result, we must seek it in the same way.

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, 1902), p. 82.

CHAPTER III

The Christian's Universe: or What to Believe About the World We Live In

1. How Jesus Would Have Us Think of the World We Live In.

   How to Test Jesus' View of the World—What Jesus Meant by "the Kingdom of God"—The World as Training School for the Kingdom—Jesus' Attitude Toward Evil.

2. The World as Modern Science Describes It.

   Jesus' View of the World in Contrast to That of Modern Science—The World as Modern Science Conceives It—The Limits of the Scientific View of the World.

3. The World as Christian Faith Helps Us to Reinterpret It.

   What God Means to the Religious Man—How God Reveals Himself—Jesus' Ideal for Society Contrasted with Other Ideals—How Jesus' Ideal Meets the Test of Life.

The universe of modern science is vastly greater than the world in which Jesus lived and more intricate in structure, but it still has features which were present in the simpler world of Jesus' day. It is still a world of opportunity and a world of value. And it is with the values life presents to us and the opportunities with which it challenges us that we are chiefly concerned. Here the exact methods of science fail us and the intuitions of faith are determining. Science can tell us what men have valued in the past and how they have chosen. Religious faith alone can furnish the insight which will determine what we shall value and decide what we shall choose. To Jesus this insight was granted in exceptional degree. What he has to tell us about the world, therefore, remains of permanent significance.

Jesus' view of the world can be summed up by saying that it is a place in which God is fitting men and women for the Kingdom of God. "The Kingdom of God" is the term Jesus uses to describe a state of society in which all human relationships are perfectly conformed to the will of God. Whatever is necessary to fit men to live worthily in this coming society, our world contains. God can use, and is using every part of it for his purpose. Even the baffling and mysterious facts of pain, and sin, and death, do not defeat God. They, too, may be instruments which he employs to fit free personalities for the life of love.

1. How Jesus Would Have Us Think of the World We Live In

How to Test Jesus' View of the World

In the last chapter we saw that Jesus' view of man implies a corresponding view of the world. This view we have now to consider more in detail. It contains three main elements, each of which is essential to the understanding of the others. We may sum them up as follows:

The world is a place in which God is preparing his children for membership in a society in which all the relationships of life will be controlled by love. This society Jesus calls "the Kingdom of God."

For those who make this society the object of their supreme loyalty, all things work together for good. There is nothing in the universe, whether in the outer world of nature or in the inner realm of personality, but in God's providence it may minister to their training and welfare.

Those who are loyal to the Kingdom of God are not exempted from the experience of pain, but the significance of pain is altered for them. It is transformed from misfortune into discipline and when accepted in the right spirit may become the means of abundant and lasting joy.

Are these convictions of Jesus still possible convictions for us to-day?

There are two ways in which Jesus' view of the world may be tested. We may test it by the method of science, or we may test it by the method of religion. In the first case, we shall ask how far it is consistent with the view of the world with which modern science

has made us familiar. In the second place, we shall ask how far it is confirmed by the experience of those who have put it to the test in their own lives.

But first we must be sure that we understand just what Jesus meant by the Kingdom of God. For there is more than one possible interpretation of his words. Unless we have clearly grasped his central thought, we may be diverted to some side issue and miss the one essential word which he has to say to us. This word is about love—the place which it holds in the nature of God and in the life of man.

What Jesus Meant by "the Kingdom of God"

When one of his disciples came to Jesus with the request, "Lord, teach us to pray," he answered him as follows: "When ye pray say: 'Father, hallowed be thy name; thy Kingdom come.' "[1]

"The Kingdom of God" is the term which Jesus uses to describe what will happen when God's ideal for men is completely realized. It is the new social order which will be introduced when God's will is done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Jesus borrowed the words which he used to describe this ideal society from the teachers who had preceded him. The phrase meant literally the reign of God, the condition of things in which God's will is everywhere supreme. The prophets had predicted that such a time was coming, a time when God would deliver his people and establish righteousness in the world. Jesus' contemporaries believed that this divine deliverance would come suddenly. Some expected that the promised deliverer would be a supernatural being coming on the clouds of heaven. Others looked for a political leader, who would do his work with the revolutionist's weapons, the sword and the torch. All of

[1] Luke 11:1, 2.

them laid more emphasis on the way the Kingdom was to come than on what it would be like when it came.

Jesus took over the phrase "the Kingdom of God," but he changed its meaning. He refused entirely to be the kind of a Messiah that his contemporaries expected. That was one of the chief reasons why they crucified him.

The point at which Jesus broke with his contemporaries was in his standard of greatness. They expected their Messiah to justify his right to rule by his superior strength. Jesus made love the mark of sovereignty. This attitude perplexed his fellow countrymen during his life and, when his years of ministry ended on Calvary, they regarded his Messiahship as definitely disproved. A Messiah who was crucified seemed to them a contradiction in terms. Yet to Jesus, the only path to greatness lay through sacrifice. "Whosoever would become great among you," he said to his disciples, "shall be your minister, and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant."[1]

Even for his followers this has proved a hard saying and in the course of history we find the older pre-Christian standards continually reasserting themselves. Sometimes the supernatural elements in the older conception have been taken over. Jesus has been pictured as a heavenly King, coming in superhuman power to destroy his enemies and to establish his throne in a rebuilt Jerusalem. Again, as in some forms of mediæval theology, the political elements have been in the ascendant. The coming of the Kingdom has been identified with the triumph of the church, and Christ has been thought of as exercising his sovereignty on earth through the Pope, his vicegerent.[2] In both cases Jesus is represented as a sov-

[1] Matt. 20:26, 27.

[2] Protestants, as well as Roman Catholics, have sometimes taken a political view of Christ's sovereignty. The Puritans identified the Kingdom of God with the reformed church of Protestantism. *Cf.* the Westminster Confession of Faith, chap. XXV, sec. 2: "The

ereign, ruling over his Kingdom like an earthly monarch and enforcing his will upon those who refuse to obey his commands. In other words, Jesus is presented as the kind of Messiah he refused to be while on earth.

As Christians have differed in their view of the nature of the Kingdom, so they have differed in their view of the time of its coming. Some, despairing of any improvement in our present civilization, would have us postpone the hope of the ideal society to the future, when Christ will return in person to establish his Kingdom on earth. Pessimists, so far as their view of the present is concerned, they believe that things must grow worse before they can be better. The Christian's duty, as they see it, is not to try to save society, but to win individuals out of this present evil world who will be the nucleus of the new and better society which Christ will establish at his coming. They appeal to Jesus' own words in support of this view, which in every age has had its representatives in the church.[1]

visible Church . . . consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children, and is the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

[1] There are passages in the Gospels in which Jesus speaks of the Kingdom as wholly in the future (*e. g.*, Mark 9:1). It is something for which we have to wait and watch and pray. When it will come and how, even Jesus does not know (Matt. 24:36). That, the Father has kept in his own control. But this he knows: that the coming will be sudden, like lightning out of a clear sky, like a bridegroom, returning unexpectedly to find the attendants, who should have welcomed him, sleeping (Matt. 24–27; 25:1–13).

But there are other passages in which Jesus is represented as speaking of the Kingdom as if it were already present in the world. "The Kingdom of God," he says, "is within you"; or, as the passage is sometimes translated, "in your midst" (Luke 17:21). He compares it to a seed growing secretly (Mark 4:26), to leaven hid in meal (Matt. 13:33). These passages seem to contemplate a considerable period of growth before the Kingdom reaches its consummation. Only after a period of probation, in which wheat and tares ripen in the same field, will the Lord of the harvest come for the reaping (Matt. 13:24–30).

Others emphasize continuity rather than change. They believe that the Kingdom is present here and now in the persons of the company, greater or smaller, of those who have accepted Christ and who live according to his principles. This group of disciples forms a society within society, the leaven in the lump, the seed sown in the field. The Kingdom, as these interpreters understand it, is the social consummation toward which God is progressively leading mankind, a consummation which will not be complete till all human relationships are dominated by the spirit of Christ and conform to his ideals.

More important than the question how the Kingdom is to come is the question what it is to be like when it comes. Here we are left in no doubt as to Jesus' meaning. Whether it come soon or late, by sudden crisis or through slow development, the Kingdom of God will be a society in which men and women live as children of God should live. When we see social relationships everywhere controlled by the principles which Jesus illustrated in his own life—the principles of trust, of love, of generous and unselfish service—we shall know that the Kingdom is here.

What this society will be like in detail, it is hard for us to picture, for it runs so counter to the ideals and practices which still dominate much of our social life. But now and again we catch glimpses of its possibilities. Paul gives us such a glimpse in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, where he shows us love in action. Now and again, in groups larger or smaller, for periods longer or shorter, we have seen the ideal in process of fulfilment.

Love, as Paul conceives it, is an attitude of the spirit in which one so identifies himself with the life of another as to rejoice in the success of that other as if it were his own. It is an attitude of humility and gentleness, of sympathy and understanding, of gener-

ous recognition of whatever is good wherever it is found. It is the attitude which Jesus himself exemplified in his own life and which he holds up as the model for all men because it expresses the nature of God himself.[1]

Love, then—the love that is not mere blind affection but the creative will to good—becomes the law of life in the Kingdom. To love as Jesus loved; to give oneself as he gave himself; to count it all joy to suffer that good may prevail; this to the Christian is to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. This is to fulfil the perfect law of righteousness.

The World as Training School for the Kingdom

It is against this background that we must understand Jesus' view of the world. It is a world fitted to prepare men for the Kingdom. All things necessary for their sustenance, their training, and their happiness, it contains. But it will sustain them and make them happy only as they submit their wills to God and commit their lives to his keeping.

Let us look at the world so far as we can through Jesus' eyes, in order to see in it what he saw.

He saw the common things that make up our world of familiar experience to-day. He saw the fields and the hills and the sea, the flowers and the trees, the birds, the animals, and the fishes. He saw the sun rise and he watched the sun go down. He felt the wind

[1] In his book *Reality*, Canon Streeter has described, with penetrating insight, the distinctive character of Christian ethics. He points out that justice, important as a regulative principle for man, is inadequate to describe God's attitude to his children. "Historically, justice was a limitation of the individual's right to vengeance. In practice, it is invoked to prevent evil rather than to create good. The Will of God must be conceived as Creative Purpose—the Will to Good. Hence there can be no conflict in the mind of God . . . between justice and mercy" (p. 218). As the Psalmist expressed it long ago (*e. g.*, Psalm 85, esp. v. 10). God's justice is fidelity to his moral purpose of redemption. It shows itself in forgiveness, as truly as in punishment. *Cf.* I John 1:9.

blow. He looked up through the silent night at the twinkling stars. He saw them not as the scientist sees them, as subjects for analysis, but as the poet sees them, as subjects for song. He saw them as wholes and not as parts, and he rejoiced in what he saw.

He saw persons; men and women and little children in all the phases of their changing life. He saw them at their work and at their play, in their joy and in their sorrow; rejoicing over their first-born and laying away their dead. He shared with them the happiness of the wedding-feast; he sympathized with them in their sickness and their pain. He went with them into the synagogue and the temple to join with them in the worship of God.

But this is not all that Jesus saw. He saw, also, a larger unseen world of which these outward things are signs and prophecy; a world of meaning and value, of ideals and hopes. He saw men and women bound together not only by the physical conditions of their earthly life but by their relation to an unseen spiritual society. The earth was a wonderful place to him because each familiar object he saw, the leaven, the seed, the fig-tree, the sunrise, suggested some spiritual truth about the Kingdom of God.

This conception of the world as a place of preparation for the better society which is to be affects Jesus' view both of the physical universe we call nature and of the persons whose life story together makes up history.

Unlike Buddha, Jesus thinks of the physical universe as having real existence. It is not a mere creation of our imagination, as some philosophers have tried to persuade us—a picture world which we have made for ourselves out of our dreams, an illusion from which we need to wake to reality. Gautama bids us flee from the world, but Jesus would have us use it, because God has made it for our sustenance, our discipline, and our happiness.

This is true of all parts of the world. Jesus had no sympathy with those who think of matter as evil and of the body as a thing to be depreciated. He loved the fields and the trees, the flowers and the birds, and drew from them some of his most impressive lessons. He accounted for the beauty of the flowers by the fact that God had clothed them. He taught that not a sparrow falls to the ground without God's knowledge.[1] He used the slow processes of nature—the growth of the seed in the field, the ripening of the corn in the ear—to illustrate God's methods in the life of man.

God cares for the sparrows, but he cares much more for men. The world of Jesus, as we have seen, was a world of persons, called to be children of God, and destined for his fellowship. Only when we touch men and women do we reach the real meaning in which Jesus sees the universe, the key to the purpose which gives unity and significance to human life. Jesus' world is a world of persons who are potentially divine.

This insight opened to Jesus vistas that extended beyond this present life. The society into which he invited men included with those who were living on the earth in his day, all the good and true men and women who had preceded them, and all the good and true who were to come after them. Jesus did not think of death as the end of life. He thought of it as a transition to a new stage of life, as an open door through which to pass into another room prepared by God for his home-coming children.

But though Jesus believed that the world in its totality—both the part we see and the larger part we cannot see—is God's world and so fitted to supply all our needs, he believed also that if it is to do for us what it was meant to do we must use it as it was

[1] Matt. 6:25–30.

meant to be used. We must make God's will our will. We must seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness. Then, and then only, shall we find all things working together for our good.[1]

This teaching of Jesus about the world corresponds to what we have already seen to be his teaching about ourselves. As submission to God's will is the condition of personal freedom, so devotion to God's Kingdom is the condition of world mastery. And as those who have tried Jesus' method in the narrower field assure us that it has done for them what he promised, so we find similar testimony coming to us from those who have made earnest with his method in the wider field.

This sense of world mastery is illustrated in signal degree in the experience of the disciple who of all the men of the first century took the missionary task of Christianity most seriously. No one ever gave himself more completely to the work of the Kingdom than the Apostle Paul; none endured greater trials or tasted more different kinds of failure. Persecuted by his countrymen, tried by the instability of his converts, ending his missionary career in a Roman prison, the Apostle Paul was yet conscious, through Christ, of having all things that life could give. Through faith in God he had tapped hidden resources of power and could say of himself: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."[2]

Jesus' Attitude Toward Evil

This reference to Paul's experience brings out another aspect of Jesus' view of the world—his attitude toward the evil which it contains. In every age men have wrestled with this problem and tried to minimize its seriousness, now by explaining away evil, now by limiting God's control. Jesus does neither of these

[1] Matt. 6:33. [2] Phil. 4:13.

things. He recognizes evil in all its hideousness and mystery—the disease that wastes the body, the sin that ravages the soul. He experienced the effects of man's perversity in its most torturing and excruciating form. But he believed that God was able to overrule evil for good, even when submission to God's will seemed to mean the defeat of his dearest hopes.

Jesus' confidence in God's control of evil extends to every form of evil, the evil in physical nature with its problem of pain, the evil in man with its problem of sin, the evil in life as a whole with its problem of failure. Jesus does not give us any theoretical solution of these problems but he shows us by his own example that, in spite of the apparent logical inconsistency, God can use evil as an instrument of good.

This is true of pain. Jesus knew (for he had verified it in his own life) that happiness and suffering are not irreconcilable. When he said to his disciples, "Happy are ye, when men shall reproach you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake,"[1] he was telling them something that he himself had proved to be true.

More difficult than the problem of suffering is the problem of sin; yet even in this most baffling and mysterious realm Jesus is confident that God is able to overrule evil for good. No one had a keener sense of the sinfulness of sin than had Jesus, or was more uncompromising in his judgment of right and wrong. Yet no one was more tender in his dealing with the individual sinner or more certain that there was no sin so heinous but that it had its remedy in the divine forgiveness.[2] When he would picture the blessedness of heaven, he points to the welcome of the penitent

[1] Matt. 5:11.

[2] The one sin which according to Jesus is unpardonable is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and the context would seem to show that what Jesus is referring to here is just the absence of the penitent spirit, without which God himself cannot forgive sin. *Cf.* Matt. 12:31, 32.

sinner. "There shall be joy in heaven," he says, "over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine righteous persons which need no repentance."[1]

Yet Jesus was no easy-going optimist, passing lightly over God's inexorable laws. If life's evils are to do for us what God means them to do, they must be met in the right spirit. This spirit is at once one of opposition and of submission—opposition, so far as our own acts can affect the situation; submission, so far as the evil in question is beyond our control. Believing, as Jesus did, that the world was God's world and that God's purpose was a loving purpose, he did not believe that it was God's will that any of his children should be permanently sick or sad or sinful. He believed that God had given us in faith a power by which we can heal sickness and drive out sin. He himself set no limits to what faith can do and he justified his confidence by his works. His ministry was a ministry to sick bodies and sick souls. He healed diseases and he forgave sins.

Yet at the same time, Jesus' attitude toward evil was one of submission. There were evils from which, it appeared, there was no hope of immediate deliverance; evils which were the inevitable result of man's wrongdoing in the past and of his lack of faith in the present. These evils Jesus accepted as permitted by God to teach us lessons we could not otherwise learn; lessons of submission, lessons of understanding, lessons of sympathy. His conception of Messiahship differed from that of his contemporaries in that his way to sovereignty led by the Cross. What he accepted for himself, he was not afraid to require of his followers. For them, too, the way that leads to the Kingdom passes under the shadow of the Cross.

The world has always found it hard to accept this teaching of Jesus, yet, when accepted and put to the

[1] Luke 15:7.

test of life, it has had far-reaching and revolutionary results. Christianity, as we have seen, is not like Buddhism, which sees in the physical universe only a part of a world of illusion from which man must be delivered if he is to reach his appointed heaven of Nirvana. It is not like Christian Science, which denies the existence of pain, or like those materialistic philosophies, which explain away the fact of sin. Jesus sees evil, in all three of its forms, as pain and sin and failure, as the most real and terrible of facts. But suffering is never the last word with Jesus. To those who have learned to use it rightly, it may be a means to abundant and lasting joy. There is healing for the sick body; for the broken heart, there is comfort; for the penitent sinner, forgiveness. He who is willing to lose his life for Jesus' sake and the gospel's shall find it again.

This, then, is what Jesus would have us think about the world—both the external world we call nature and the inner world of personality, "the Kingdom of the Wills": that it is God's world, made by him, and hence that it has real significance both for man and for God; that it is a dependent world, fashioned by his Spirit and subject to his control; that it is a meaningful world, lending itself to the uses for which it was appointed, as the school in which God is training his children for the life of the Kingdom of God.

Is this view a tenable one for us to-day?

2. The World as Modern Science Describes It

Jesus' View of the World in Contrast to That of Modern Science

We have seen that there are two ways in which Jesus' view of the world may be tested. We may test it by the method of science, or we may test it by the

method of religion. In the first case, we shall ask how far it is consistent with the new facts which modern science has brought to light. In the second case, we shall ask how far it is confirmed by the experience of those who have put it to the test in their own lives.

A word, first, as to what science can tell us about the world we live in. Our more accurate methods of observation and description have brought to light a host of facts of which Jesus knew nothing. We have not only learned new things about the world he knew. We have discovered other worlds of whose existence he was ignorant.

For Jesus' contemporaries the world was a comparatively small place. The earth was the centre of things, a flat expanse of land and water, more than half of its surface still unexplored. Above it stretched the firmament, an arch of blue, which separated the waters which were over the earth from the waters that were under the earth. Below was Sheol, the land of the shades, whither men went when they died, and from which the redeemed were to rise to their blessed life in heaven. The view of history matched this view of geography. It began with the day of creation and ended with the day of judgment, separated at the most by a few thousands of years. As the world had had a beginning in time, so it would have an end in time, when God who had made the world would destroy it to make room for a new heaven and a new earth which he was preparing.

What a contrast to the world in which we are living to-day! Our world has become a universe, or rather a whole series of universes, stretching out into reaches of space that dizzy the imagination. As there seems no limit to the distance to which the telescope can penetrate, so there seems no limit to the tiny worlds to which the microscope may introduce us. The world of the infinitely great is matched by the world of the infinitely small.

The change in the extension of the universe is paralleled by a corresponding change in its duration. Our thought reaches back over millions and hundreds of millions of years without finding any place in which to rest. Far from being the centre of the universe, this earth of ours is but a planet, revolving about a sun which is itself only one of the most modest members of a family of suns. Countless æons have gone into its making and other æons must follow before it is resolved into the elements of which it is composed. Scientists may debate whether the universe is finite or infinite. But, to our imagination, it has no longer any limits, either in space or time. The reverence which other ages reserved for God, our contemporaries feel toward nature. The infinity which used to be the distinguishing mark of the Creator is now the attribute of the cosmos.

But great as is the change in our estimate of the magnitude of the universe, the change in our view of its structure is even greater. Jesus' world was a comparatively simple world and things happened in it in simple ways. As God had made the world in the first instance, so he had given to each creature in it its appropriate powers and qualities and each acted after its kind. When God approved, he rewarded; when he disapproved, he punished. There were no barriers by which he was hampered, no obstacles in the nature of things by which he was prevented from carrying out his will.

But we know to-day that the ways in which things happen are far more complicated. Science has been teaching us about the structure of the world and has reconstructed for us the intricate mechanism necessary for even the simplest act. It has banished, or is rapidly banishing, the arbitrary elements which played so large a part in the thought of Jesus' contemporaries. For miracle, it has substituted the uniformity of law.

This change appears most strikingly in the view of the Kingdom of God. To Jesus' contemporaries there was nothing strange in the thought that the Kingdom should come in sudden and miraculous fashion. That was the way it seemed natural to them for God to act. Men trained in modern scientific methods have grown so accustomed to thinking in evolutionary terms that such a view of the coming of the Kingdom presents all but insuperable difficulties to them. How is it possible, they ask us, that Jesus can still have anything significant to teach us who live in a world so different from his!

If Jesus had professed to anticipate the results of modern science, this divergence of view would, indeed, be fatal. But there is no reason for supposing that he did so. So far as we can tell, he accepted the views of his contemporaries on science and history at their face value, as one who is not a specialist would do to-day. But he looked beyond the facts they described to the spiritual meanings which they expressed. And what he saw he pictured in language which still grips our imagination. This inner meaning, as we have seen, had to do with the nature of God's purpose for his world and what the acceptance of that purpose may mean for the life of the individual and of society. The question that concerns us here is whether the new knowledge which science has brought has discredited his view on these two points.

The World as Modern Science Conceives It

It is impossible within the compass of a few pages to give even the barest sketch of the kind of world which the different sciences picture for us. Astronomy, geology, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, history—each contributes its share to the whole, and the contribution of each is constantly changing with the new knowledge

which the research of each generation is adding to the general store.

But through all the variations in detail certain general conceptions persist which together make up what we call the scientific view of the world. The first of these and the most familiar is the conviction that the world we live in is a world of order, or, to use the more familiar scientific term, of law. Things do not come haphazard. They are related to one another as parts of a system. Our world is a universe, a cosmos, the home of order and of relation.

This is true of all parts of the world, without exception. It is true of the physical universe. It is true of the life of the individual. It is true of man's life in society. It is true no less of his religious life. Nothing happens by chance. Each event follows its antecedents as part of an unvarying sequence, without intermission or break. Human choices are no exception. Whatever may be the meaning of the mysterious power we know as freedom, it does not exempt us from law. As the scientist sees it, determinism and freedom are not two inconsistent things but names for the same process seen from different angles.

But there is another conviction which is even more important in its practical effects, and that is that the world is plastic. It lends itself to man's uses and its forces may be directed to his ends. Our world is not only a world of order but a world of opportunity.

Order does not mean changelessness. On the contrary, the world, as modern science sees it, is in constant flux. Nothing is still for a moment. As the sun moves in the heavens and the planets revolve around the sun, so the solar system is a part of a universe of which every part is in motion. And what is true of the largest bodies is true also of the smallest. Each atom is a little world in which ion and electron rotate with inconceivable rapidity along pathways which have been predetermined.

Not only is there change, but development. Things not only move, they grow. The acorn unfolds into the oak; the child is father to the man. Nor is this growth simply an affair of the individual. It characterizes the universe as a whole. One form of existence succeeds another. Life appears, consciousness awakes, species multiply, and the individuals within each species. The story of the world is the story of a ceaseless evolution from the simpler to the more complex.[1]

If we look at this process more closely, we discover two parallel laws which seem to operate side by side. One is a law of conflict, which expresses itself in a struggle for existence. Myriads of living creatures, in the different species, fight for the position of vantage which will enable them to prolong life. They prey upon one another, and only the strongest survive. Of all these countless numbers, only a few reach maturity. The many fall by the way. It was this spectacle of a nature "red in tooth and claw" that roused the ire of Thomas Huxley and led him to deny that man, who seeks justice and loves mercy, can find any basis for his moral ideals in nature.[2]

Yet side by side with this struggle for existence, there is another contest going on, a struggle for the life of others. Henry Drummond[3] has called attention to the fact that altruism does not begin with man, but can be traced as far back as the animal creation. The mother bird cares for her young and the father bird brings food to the nest. There are parents who, in a literal sense, give their lives for their children. The law of conflict is matched by a parallel law of sacrifice.

With the appearance of human beings, new factors

1 *Cf.* Morgan, C. L., *Emergent Evolution* (New York, 1927).

2 *Evolution and Ethics, Romanes Lecture for 1893* (London, 1893), pp. 33, 34.

3 *Ascent of Man* (New York, 1894), pp. 215 *seq. Cf.* Thomson, J. Arthur, *Science and Religion* (New York, 1925).

appear, and the new factors give rise to new problems. Consciousness, already present in more or less developed form in man's predecessors, becomes self-consciousness. Instinct is reinforced by reason. Man is no longer simply observer; he becomes critic. He not only acts, he appreciates the significance of his action.

With the emergence of these new factors, man's attitude toward the world changes. He is no longer content to take it as it comes; he begins to shape and fashion it according to pictures in his mind. Subject to law though it be, his environment becomes plastic under his hands. He can make of it, within limits, what he will.

The tool which he uses for this work of reconstruction is science. We ordinarily think of science primarily as an instrument of knowledge. Through science, we become acquainted with the changeless laws that determine all that happens in ourselves and in the world in which we live. But science not only defines for us the way things happen: it shows us how to use the knowledge we have won to reshape life according to our desires. Science begins with description, but it does not stop with description; its last word is control.

This is true of every form of science. It is true of the physical sciences. The more we learn about the world we live in, the more we find it lends itself to our uses. The titanic forces that used to be our masters have become our servants. Electricity runs our errands; steam carries our burdens; water drives our mills; the sun paints our pictures. With every passing year our power of control grows greater and there seems no limit to what the future may make possible.

What is true of nature is true also of man. What physical science is doing for our control of physical

nature, psychology promises to do for human nature. The old dictum that human nature remains always the same may be true of the principles that govern it and the laws to which it is subject, but not of the uses to be made of those principles or the results that may follow from their application. All modern education is based upon the belief that human nature can be improved. To the wise teacher, each new child is a new opportunity.

What the psychologists propose for the life of the individual, the sociologists would undertake for the life of society. They, too, believe that by the study of process it is possible to improve result. The phenomenal success of James Harvey Robinson's *The Mind in the Making*[1] was due to the conviction that inspired its author that by bringing scientific methods to bear upon the study of social relationships, it is possible to remodel our political and economic life, as we have already made over our physical life. Even the law is not immune to the contagion of the new enthusiasm. So sober a student as Judge Benjamin Cardozo[2] conceives it to be the function of the judge of the future not only to expound the law as his predecessors have defined it, but to reinterpret it so that it may more adequately conform to the social conscience of his day. To the student of man, as to the student of nature, the great word of science is "opportunity."

The Limits of the Scientific View of the World

With the discovery of opportunity the real problem of the scientist begins, and with it the realization of the limits of all purely scientific activity. This problem is twofold: how to control the new powers

[1] New York, 1922.

[2] *The Nature of the Judicial Process* (New Haven, 1922). *Cf.* esp. pp. 98 *seq.*, "The Judge as a Legislator."

which our better understanding of nature puts at our disposal, and how to decide for what to use them when we have mastered them. With the first problem, as we have seen, scientists have been able to cope with gratifying success; but the second has brought them face to face with a new factor which requires to be treated in different fashion—that mysterious quality in things which we call "value."

We use the word "value" to describe the elements in our experience which cannot be measured by any mathematical test—elements which we distinguish by their quality rather than their quantity, like a friend's character or the beauty of a rose. We enter a field here in which mathematical standards break down yet in which we are none the less conscious of our need of a standard. The more clearly we perceive the possibilities which knowledge opens to us, the more keenly we are aware of the powers which it puts within our grasp, the more acutely we realize our need of some norm to give direction to our activities, some criterion by which the advantages of the different alternatives open to us may be appraised. But what that norm should be and how these values should be measured, science alone cannot tell us. For this we need other methods, methods of a more intimate and personal character.

What science alone cannot do for us philosophy attempts. Each is concerned with facts, but each approaches them in a different way. Science is concerned with the order in which things happen and the processes through which they pass; philosophy with their meaning and value. Science works through analysis and classification; philosophy gives greater weight to the intuitions of faith. Philosophy treats of the wholes of which the sciences describe the parts and attempts to answer the questions which the sciences raise but which they themselves cannot answer.

We may illustrate the difference in the case of a particular science like geology or psychology. Geology tells us the story of the way in which our present earth has come to be what it is, a process much longer and more complicated than our fathers supposed. What it means for us that it has taken this form rather than another, geology cannot tell us. That is the work of philosophy; and the different schools of philosophy differ in their answer. Materialists tell us that matter is the ultimate reality. Idealists say that it is spirit; theists that it is a personal God, in some respects akin to us.

So psychology describes for us the genesis of our consciousness and analyzes it into its elements. It points out its connection with the nervous system and its antecedents in instinct and impulse. But what the self really is, whence it came, and whither it is going, psychology cannot tell us. That is the function of philosophy, and, most of all, of theology, which is the philosophy of religion.

Yet, even in the field of value, science has its own contribution to make. It reminds us how large a place man's judgments of value have played in the past and what influence they have exerted on his life. History, which is the science of man's past,[1] is in large part the story of man's ideals, or, in other words, the standards by which he has defined his values. These ideals are facts which must be reckoned with in our description of the real world. However we account for them, whatever we make of them, now that they are here, we ignore them at our peril. In the realm of the intellect, we have the ideal of truth; in the realm of conduct, the ideal of justice; in the realm of the emotions, the ideal of beauty; in our

[1] The question whether history is science or philosophy is one which cannot be answered either with an unqualified "yes" or an unqualified "no." As the record of the facts which have happened in the past, it is science; as the interpretation of their meaning for the present, it is philosophy.

estimate of character as a whole, the ideals of goodness, of honor, and of holiness. These are the standards by which men measure themselves and judge one another, and they are standards which endure from age to age.

They are standards which endure from age to age; yet—this is the paradox of human life—they are ideals that are always changing. In every age men have sought truth, preached justice, rejoiced in beauty, and admired goodness. But as to what is true, and what just, what beautiful, and what good, they have not always agreed. What one age has approved another has condemned and the criminal the fathers crucified has become the Messiah of the children. History, which records the vicissitudes of man's changing experience, can tell us what specific things men have valued. It can reproduce for us the ideals of the past, so that when we must choose for ourselves, we may overlook no possibility that is open to us. When our sense of the fluctuations of life grows so keen as to lead us to despair of any fixed standard, it can point us to the permanent and recurrent elements in experience and so supply the balance we need.

One further service history can render for us. It can tell us what man has done with his ideals; when he has embraced, when rejected them, and what consequences have followed either from his acceptance or his rejection.

For this is the significant fact about man as history retells his story for us: that he is not only a creature who has ideals but who falls below the ideals he has. Sometimes in deliberate wilfulness, more often in carelessness or indolence, man knows the good and chooses the evil, approves the right and does the wrong. In every age the theme of the great drama-

tists and poets, this tragedy of the spirit has cast its shadow across the life of man and changed what would otherwise have been the story of normal development into a record of failure and sin. Science can register the facts; it can tell us, as we have seen, where, if anywhere, the remedy must be found; but it cannot itself supply it. That remedy must be the work of religion, which gives life to the ideals which science can only describe.

There is nothing, then, in the view of the world as modern science describes it which is inconsistent with Jesus' central convictions about nature and man. For the modern scientist, as truly as for Jesus, the world is a world of opportunity and a world of value. But whether Jesus is to be trusted in his interpretation of opportunity and in his estimate of value, we must learn in other ways. Science may admit the possibility; it cannot itself establish the fact.

3. The World as Christian Faith Helps Us to Reinterpret It

What God Means to the Religious Man

The contribution of religion to our understanding of the world can be expressed in a single word, the word "God." When you ask a religious man the meaning of the world in which he lives, he will tell you that it is a scene in which God is revealing his presence. If he is a Christian, he will add that it is the school in which he is fitting men for fellowship with himself.

And by "God" he means two things. First, the Being in whom the values after which man is striving—the ideals of truth, justice, beauty, and goodness—are perfectly realized; and secondly, the One who makes possible their realization in others. God,

to the worshipper, is not only the realized ideal. He is the one who is realizing the ideal in us.[1]

The conception of God is, indeed, no monopoly of religion. It is a conception to which man is irresistibly brought by the processes of his thought. Among the ideas which form the philosopher's stock in trade, that of God is one of the oldest and most persistent. "God" is the name he gives to the ultimate reality, however that reality may be defined. Whether conceived as spirit or as matter, or as a mysterious substance having the attributes of both, whether immanent reason, moral personality, *élan vital*, or blind, unconscious will, God is the basic fact in the philosopher's universe of discourse, the ultimate boundary beyond which his thought cannot go.

What the philosopher defines, the religious man worships. Religion transfers man's dealing with God from the outer world to the inner. All vital religion is experimental religion. It is consciousness of an immediate presence, the taking off of one's shoes because the ground is holy. How this consciousness arises and what is its validity as an organ of knowledge, may be the subject of inquiry. No one who has had first-hand experience of living religion will question that it marks the dividing line between philosophy and religion.

Theology is an interpretation of this experience of present deity in terms of contemporary science and philosophy. Sometimes the interpretation lives on after the experience itself has ceased and becomes the source of endless misunderstanding; but interpretation is inevitable if religion is to do for us all that it should. Unless we are content to lead a double life,

[1] It is true that this conception in its developed form meets us only in religions that have attained a certain maturity. Nevertheless, the two elements which we have here distinguished are implicitly present in all religion and their history can be traced back to the most primitive forms.

mind and emotion each going its own way without inner reconciliation or harmony, the insights that religion brings must be integrated with the facts that science records in a consistent philosophy of life.

There was a time when men thought of God as an individual among individuals, greater and stronger than man, no doubt, but still essentially similar in kind, acting upon them from without as they conceived themselves to act upon one another, shaping the world as a carpenter would shape the raw material he was using, but having his home and the sphere of his distinctive activity elsewhere. To-day we think of God not as outside the world, but within it; the energy that moves it, the life that animates it, the mind that directs it, the will that controls it, the goodness that gives it value, the truth that gives it meaning. To discover God, we do not need to leave the world of facts; but we do need to reinterpret these facts in the light of the larger context in which religion sets them. The supernatural, as we conceive it, is not something apart from the natural, added from without; it is the natural seen in its true meaning, as the expression of the divine purpose and the instrument of the divine will.

How God Reveals Himself

This does not mean that this purpose appears with equal definiteness at every point, or is perceived with equal clearness by every person. On the contrary, there are occurrences in nature and events in history which have brought, and still bring, to individual men and women a consciousness of the divine presence which, so far as we can see, they could have gained in no other way. The storm on Mount Horeb brought an illumination to Elijah which he had sought in vain during sunny days.[1] The vision which

[1] I Kings 19: 1–18.

came to Saul on the Damascus Road gave him an assurance of Christ's right to dominate his life which he had not dreamed of before.

So there are individuals to whom the consciousness of God's presence is granted with special vividness. They have a faculty of spiritual vision which is not given to ordinary men. They not only see God for themselves; they have the power of mediating their vision to others. When we touch them, we feel as if a veil had fallen from our own eyes. What they see, they help us to see.

Among these prophetic spirits—not only religious themselves, but the founders and reformers of religion—Jesus holds a central place. To him was given in unique degree the capacity to see God in common things; and the proof that what he saw was really there is that now that he has come others are able to see more clearly. The familiar experiences of every day, the recurrent happenings of daily life, the things we had taken for granted as needing no special explanation, now become meaningful and significant, since they speak to us of God.

So to conceive of the world as the scene of God's constant presence is not to empty life of its mystery. On the contrary, it is to bring us face to face with a deeper mystery. The religious experience is always an experience of wonder in the presence of mystery, the mystery at once baffling and fascinating, that religion calls "God." This quality may attach to very different kinds of experiences and is consistent with many different ways of conceiving of the divine. The pantheist Spinoza felt it as truly as the theist Paul. It is the sense of a mystery that is meaningful, "a luminous surprise."[1]

[1] *Cf.* my article "The Permanent Significance of Miracle for Religion," Harvard Theological Review, July, 1915. In his recent book *The Idea of the Holy*, Professor Otto has reminded us of the irrational element in all religion, by which he means its appeal to

Far from banishing this sense from our world, the discoveries of science have intensified it in the highest degree. With the enlargement of nature through the pushing back of the boundaries of space and time, the ancient mother has taken on the qualities that used to be reserved for the God who was the author of nature. The finite has put on the garment of infinity.

What shall we say of this new nature that science reveals to us? What truer thing can we say than what Jesus has already said, that it is the handiwork of God. Nature is wonderful and mysterious because God who reveals himself through nature is wonderful and mysterious. It is the instrument through which the unseen Father is making his presence and purpose known to man, his child.

The Christian view of history answers to the Christian view of nature. What threescore and ten years mean for the life of the individual, history means for the life of humanity. History, as Lessing perceived long ago, is God's education of the human race.

Jesus' Ideal for Society Contrasted with Other Ideals

In the course of man's development, contrasted ideals have emerged which, between them, have divided his allegiance. There is the ideal of conflict, the ideal of contemplation, the ideal of fellowship. Each has its basis in a permanent element in human nature; each builds upon it a conception of God and a corresponding philosophy of life.

In 1906, shortly before the great war broke out, there appeared a book by an Oxford don, named Gar-

something more elemental and basic than thought. There is a quality in this experience so unique that to describe it Otto has coined a new word. He has called it the experience of the "numinous." *Cf.* also Whitehead, A. N., *Religion in the Making* (New York, 1926).

rod, called *The Religion of All Good Men.*[1] It was a plea for honesty in religion. "Let us cease to call ourselves Christians," he said, "when we do not follow Christ." The true religion of Englishmen, Mr. Garrod argued, is not that of Jesus, or even of Plato, but that of the Goths. It is the religion of the strong man, who loves the world and the flesh, and whose ideals are chivalry and honor. Whether it be business or politics, love or war, the brave man conquers and the coward goes to the wall, and the power that made the world has ordained that it shall be so. This fighting, self-reliant religion develops courage and disciplines character. It is the religion in which all good men really believe and in which they delight.

Ten years before Mr. Garrod wrote, a young Greek priest was talking to a Western fellow student about the nature of religion. "I cannot understand what you Westerners mean by religion," he said, "you seem to be always wanting to *do* something for God. Our idea of religion is just the opposite. It is to be still before God and let him do for us." To the mystics of every age, God is the object of contemplation rather than the inspirer of activity, the one altogether lovely, who must be loved for himself alone. If we seek him, he will hide himself from us; if we try to constrain him, he will resist us; only when the will has been completely surrendered will he make his presence felt.

There is a third ideal which combines what is best in both the others; it is the ideal of fellowship. True fellowship makes demands both upon the militant and the passive virtues. In a society of persons conscious of the ties that unite them to one another, each individual will strive to the utmost to develop every power that is in him, and for that purpose he will welcome conflict, with its test of eye and hand and

[1] Garrod, H. W., *The Religion of All Good Men, and Other Studies in Christian Ethics* (New York, 1906). *Cf.* esp. p. 30.

brain. But the motive that will inspire him in his struggle will not be a selfish desire for personal advantage, but the prospect of a fuller and a richer life for all. Like Mr. Greatheart in *Pilgrim's Progress*, he will fight, not for himself alone, but for others.

Jesus, as we have seen, makes the third ideal his own. He asks of his disciples both conflict and sacrifice. He would have each make the most of himself, because the highest fellowship is possible only between persons who are at their best. But what each has won, whether in the outer world or in the inner, he would have him share.

How his insight came to Jesus, we need not here inquire. It is a part of the secret of his personality. Enough to know that it came to him, as all great insights have come, through a first-hand experience that carried with it its own evidence. When he came back from his lonely days of meditation in the wilderness to begin his preaching of the Kingdom, it was with an inner certainty that carried conviction to his hearers and made it easy for them to share his faith that the Kingdom of God was at hand.

How Jesus' Ideal Meets the Test of Life

At a crisis in his ministry, the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus, asking for some proof that he was the promised Messiah. Pointing them to the things that were happening about them, he said: "Go your way and tell John the things ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up and the poor have the good tidings preached to them; and blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me."[1]

To multitudes in every generation this answer has carried conviction. They have believed in Jesus be-

[1] Matt. 11:4–6.

cause of what they have seen him do—for others, but most of all for themselves. Faith in him has brought to some health of body, to others healing of the mind. Men with guilty consciences have received assurance of forgiveness. Those who were the slaves of their passions have been set free and made strong. Surrendering to Jesus, they have found their true selves, and with the change in themselves their entire world has been transformed.

But while this has been true of individual men and women, society as a whole is still unchristian. The Gospel of the Kingdom remains a hope for the future, a hope that to many, even of those who call themselves Christians, seems too good to be true. When we remember how many centuries have passed since Jesus first came preaching the Kingdom and when we reflect how profound is the contradiction between his standard of greatness and that which dominates much of our economic and political life, we can understand why so many refuse to take Jesus' ideal for society seriously and why others who embrace it transfer it from this present world to a new and miraculous future, when conditions shall be radically different.

There is, however, an increasing number of persons who have been asking themselves why, if Jesus' Gospel of love can bring healing to the individual, it should not also prove efficacious in healing our diseased society. Surely, if the world be God's world and faith the power Jesus believed it to be, there can be no inherent reason, except our own lack of faith, why the Kingdom for which Jesus taught us to pray should not come here and now. What else could he have meant when he added to the prayer "Thy Kingdom come" the words that follow: "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

This faith in God's power to change society, as

well as the individuals who compose it, has given birth to what is often called the social gospel. The social gospel is our name for the way in which in a scientific age we visualize Jesus' summons to helpfulness. We cannot love our brother in the abstract; not, at least, in the Christian way. We must show our love for him in the particular situation in which he finds himself, as parent, teacher, pupil, employer, workman, citizen, as the case may be. But under the complicated conditions of our modern life, when the acts of one man may affect the welfare of thousands and tens of thousands whom he has never seen, this is much more difficult than it used to be. Knowledge is needed in order to love effectively, knowledge made possible only by patient study of conditions as they are.

More even than knowledge, however, faith is needed, faith in God's power to transform human wills and win them to loyalty to Jesus Christ and his ideals. Many of the old obstacles which made it difficult to believe in the possibility of a helpful and happy society have now been removed. We know that there is enough in the world for all, if only we combine to make it available, and science is showing us more clearly every day how this can be done. It is not knowledge that we lack so much as the will to use the knowledge that we have. And the lack of will, in turn, is due not so much to deliberate selfishness as to distrust of those whose co-operation is necessary if we are to succeed. Greatest of all our obstacles to-day in every phase of social life is lack of faith. Greatest of all the gifts the church could bring to the world would be a rebirth of faith.

Three years ago, at Stockholm, representatives of many Christian bodies, from nearly forty different countries, met to consider their social responsibility as Christians. Every variety of theology was repre-

sented in the gathering. Some of those present held the purely other-worldly view of the Kingdom, others believed that the Kingdom was already in the world and that it was to develop progressively until the end. But they all agreed that, whatever might be God's plan for the bringing in of his Kingdom, our duty is clear. It is our responsibility to express in every possible way, not only by words but by deeds, the love which Jesus inspires in his followers and to devise methods by which this love can be made effective in every form of human life and in every variety of social relationship.[1]

How far it will be possible to carry this principle, what obstacles we shall meet, what defeats we may encounter, no one can predict. This at least we can say with confidence: that so far as we have succeeded in improving social conditions, it is by using Jesus' methods and testing our success by his ideals.

In his book *Christianizing the Social Order*,[2] Walter Rauschenbusch has pointed out in some detail the extent to which the application of Christian principles to social problems has already been carried. There are institutions like the family which, in ideal at least, are already Christian. There are professions like those of the teacher and the doctor where unselfish service is expected. But there are still wide areas of life, such as business and politics, where self-seeking is regarded as a virtue. To-day we are beginning to raise the question whether what has proved desirable in the narrower field may not prove practicable in the wider. There was a time when it

[1] "The Conference has deepened and purified our devotion to the Captain of our Salvation. Responding to his call, 'Follow me,' we have in the presence of the Cross accepted the urgent duty of applying the Gospel in all realms of human life—industrial, social, political, and international."—From *The Message of the Conference*, II, 5; Bell, G. K. A., *The Stockholm Conference* (London, 1926), p. 711.

[2] New York, 1912.

was taken for granted that selfishness should regulate the relations between nations, and war was the accepted method of settling social disputes. To-day we are beginning to realize that national selfishness leads inevitably to war, and war—even when it is still felt to be inevitable—is dreaded as intolerable. If this danger is to be averted and this horror escaped, it will be because enough persons in the different countries take Jesus seriously, put his view of the world to the test, and prove within their own environment that his ideal is practicable for society, as they have already proved in their own persons that it is practicable for individuals.

PART III. CHRIST AND THE CROSS

CHAPTER IV

The Christian's Leader: or What to Believe About Jesus

1. Who Say Ye That I Am?

   Jesus' Question About Himself—The Christ of the Theologians—The Jesus of the Critics—Jesus' Challenge to Our Generation.

2. How Christians Have Answered Jesus' Question.

   Three Ways of Thinking of Jesus—Their Basis in Experience—Their Formulation in Doctrine.

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5. Is Jesus Still the Leader the Modern World Needs?

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Christians have expressed their faith in Jesus in three ways: They have thought of him as the ideal man, as God incarnate, as the Saviour of the World. These beliefs are not purely intellectual propositions to be tested by logic alone. They are signs pointing to unseen realities with which it is possible for us to have first-hand contact in experience. Our most convincing reason for believing that Jesus is the ideal man is not because we can prove that he never committed sin, but because when we come into contact with his pure and holy character we realize that we ourselves are sinners. So our reason for believing that he is God incarnate is not because we can demonstrate that during his earthly life he possessed attributes which no other man has ever possessed, but because when we touch him we feel a vitalizing and transforming influence which assures us that we have to do with God. This power to transform and to renew, which continues in spite of the changes which modern study of the Gospels has made in our understanding of his life, is our warrant for believing that Jesus is still the leader the modern world needs and that in despite of every obstacle he will ultimately win all men to his cause.

1. Who Say Ye That I Am?

Jesus' Question About Himself

On a memorable occasion near the close of his public ministry, Jesus abandoned for a moment the reserve which was characteristic of him where personal matters were concerned and asked his disciples to tell him what his contemporaries thought about him. When they had reported the different views which had come to their knowledge, he gave the question a more intimate and searching turn by asking them, "But who say ye that I am?"[1]

It is a question which has been repeated in each succeeding generation and the answer we make to it will determine our attitude toward every fundamental problem of religion.

Yet it seems on the face of it a question of a wholly different order from those which have hitherto interested us. The question what God is like and what is his relation to the world, the question whence man has come and what is his duty and destiny, have universal interest. But Jesus was an individual who lived at a definite period of history. His contribution to humanity, like that of other great men, might easily be thought of as temporary and limited.

Whether reasonable or not, the question is inevitable. Jesus holds a unique position in the religion that bears his name. His person took a central place, almost from the first, both in the affections and in the thought of his disciples. He not only set the standard for their thinking about themselves. He became identified with their deepest thoughts of God. As time went by, they not only reverenced him; they

[1] Matt. 16:15.

worshipped him. Much might be lost from historic Christianity without altering its essential nature; Christianity without Christ is a contradiction in terms.

But though the question is inevitable, it is not easy to answer. The figure of Jesus comes toward us across the ages transfigured by an aureole of reverence and adoration. And when, by an effort of the will, we attempt to penetrate to the real man, we are confronted with impalpable barriers. Among these obstacles to a true understanding of Jesus are the churchly doctrines about his person, the historical uncertainties in the story of his life, the contrast between his standards and the standards and ideals of our modern life.

The Christ of the Theologians

The theological doctrines about Jesus grew up naturally and for an entirely legitimate purpose. They were efforts to define, in language natural to their time, the place which Jesus held in the faith of his disciples. They have fulfilled the same function in the world of thought that the pictures of Fra Angelico or of Raphael have fulfilled in the world of art, or the hymns of St. Bernard and Isaac Watts in the literature of devotion. They picture Jesus as the expression, in human form, of the grace and love of the eternal God, who, in infinite compassion, has drawn near to save needy and sinful men. When the bishops who met at the Council of Chalcedon said of Jesus that he was very God and very man, two natures in one person,[1] they were trying to find an intellectual basis for what Titian tried to put into the face of Christ when he painted his great picture of the

[1] The Council of Chalcedon, which met in 451, formulated the doctrine of the person of Christ in the following words, which are not only accepted as authoritative by all Catholics, whether East-

Transfiguration; or what St. Bernard felt when he said:

"Jesus, the very thought of thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see,
And in thy presence rest.

"Nor voice can tell, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than thy blest name,
O Saviour of mankind."

But with the passage of time, the original connection was lost between doctrine and experience. The articles of faith formulated at the Councils of Nicæa and Chalcedon were treated as philosophical propositions and were judged by academic standards. In something the same way the great religious paintings lost the significance they had for the generations which first saw them and, as faith passed away, were valued as works of art and judged by technical standards of form and color. When in a great cathedral to-day we look up at the figure of Christ portrayed in a stained-glass window, with a halo of gold over his crown of thorns, he seems to us a figure out of another world. So the Christ of the creeds has become a stranger to many of us, and even the hymns in which we chant his praises have a note of unreality. In such a majestic figure, human in name only, it is difficult to recognize the sorrowful young teacher, who, when he saw his popularity waning, turned to his disciples with the question, "Will ye also go away?"[1]

ern Orthodox, Roman, or Anglican, but have been incorporated into the creed of many of the Protestant churches of the West.

"We confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ . . . truly God and truly man . . . to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably . . . not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ."

[1] John 6:67.

The Jesus of the Critics

For three generations scholars have been toiling with infinite patience to restore what has been lost. Little by little, students in many lands have been winning back for us a truer conception of the man whose story the Gospels record. We know to-day that the Gospels are not exact history, as the modern historian understands that term. They introduce us to Jesus as he appeared to the faith and loyalty of his disciples. But since our world differs in so many respects from that in which these first disciples lived, we wish to know what the real Jesus was like, in order that we may decide whether the estimate which the first Christians formed of their Lord is one which we can make our own.

Here recent students of the life of Jesus have much help to bring. They carry us back with them across the centuries and introduce us to the environment in which Jesus lived and the persons with whom he associated. We climb the hill behind Nazareth and look upon the scenes on which his boyish eyes must have rested. We go with him to the synagogue on the Sabbath and hear again the kind of teaching to which he must often have listened. We see him plying his trade as a carpenter. We reconstruct in imagination the different currents of thought with which he was brought into contact when, after the call at the Jordan, he left his father's house and began his work as a preacher of the coming Kingdom. And as we put him thus into his historic setting, the Christ of the theologians fades into the background and Jesus becomes a historic figure, a man of like passions with ourselves.

But the more seriously we take the humanity of Jesus, the more we familiarize ourselves with all the facts about him, the more we become conscious of

the mystery of his person. Of Jesus it is true, even as it is true of the Bible, that each finds in him what he seeks. Even in their reconstruction of the human figure, students of his life are not agreed. They cannot give us certainty about simple matters such as how long Jesus' ministry lasted, or what was the original form of some of his most familiar sayings. And when we come to more important questions, like the nature of his personality or the character of his gospel, the divergence grows greater. Some emphasize the things he had in common with his contemporaries; others what seems to them novel and original in his teaching. For some it is the ethical teacher who seems most significant; for others the preacher of the coming Kingdom; for still others the revealer of the present God. As soon as we go beyond the simplest facts and attempt an interpretation of the personality revealed by the facts, the personal equation of the interpreter begins to affect his portrait.

Yet the fact remains that, whoever and whatever he was, Jesus exercises a perennial attraction for the spirits of men. The fascination which Otto[1] reminds us is characteristic of the religious experience attaches to him in an unexampled degree. Institutions grow old, philosophies lose their grip. He remains the most arresting fact in all our world of facts; the most interesting person in all our catalogue of persons.

Within the past half-dozen years, four books have appeared, each of which attempts a new interpretation of Jesus. One is by a scholar of Russian descent,[2] the second by an Italian novelist,[3] the third

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 31–41.

[2] Simkhovitch, V. G., *Toward the Understanding of Jesus* (New York, 1921).

[3] Papini, E., *Life of Christ*, Eng. tr. by D. C. Fisher (New York, 1923).

by an English man of letters,[1] the fourth by a missionary to India.[2] These books differ widely in their conception and point of view, in the scholarly preparation of their authors and in the motives which have led them to write; but they all agree in the extraordinary homage which they pay to Jesus, their sense of the authority and finality of his message to mankind. From whatever angle they approach him, in whatever other respects their interpretations may differ, they make us realize that we are in the presence of a master.[3]

Jesus' Challenge to Our Generation

This suggests the third, and in some respects the greatest of all the obstacles to a true understanding of Jesus, namely, the contrast between his standards and the standards and ideals of our modern life.

In a penetrating essay in the *Hibbert Journal*, written more than twenty years ago,[4] Principal L. P. Jacks raised the question why modern critical study of the life of Jesus had not done more to win the thoughtful men and women of our generation to the Christian church. And he answered his own question by saying that it was just because criticism had brought Jesus closer to them. It is not

[1] Murry, J. Middleton, *Jesus, Man of Genius* (London, 1926).
[2] Jones, E. Stanley, *The Christ of the Indian Road* (New York, 1925).
[3] As an especially impressive example of what I have in mind, I may quote the following from the preface to Middleton Murry's *Jesus, Man of Genius*:

"In the words of the man who was in spirit, but not in fact, his beloved disciple, who understood once and for all time the eternal significance of his Master, 'Jesus came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly.' The old ways of approach to that life-giving stream are closed to many modern men. For these I write. We have to know him after the flesh. There is for us no other way. But to know him after the flesh is to know him after the spirit; for we shall find that he was, in very truth, the ineffable Word made Flesh" (p. xiii).

[4] *On the Alleged Indifference of Laymen to Religion,* vol. II, pp. 252–258 (1904).

only what men do not know about Jesus that separates them from him, but what they do know. One could accommodate oneself to the Christ of the creeds. With the Christ of conventional Christianity, one could make terms. But what shall one do with this uncompromising figure with his all or nothing? There is an imperious quality in Jesus, as modern research has made him known to us which, for all his gentleness, makes us conscious of his right to command, a right all the more inexorable because the law he lays upon his disciples is the law of love. To take Jesus seriously at this point would mean for many a modern man a break with accepted standards at the very point where the break would be most difficult; and he is too honest to profess what he does not mean to perform.

Jesus met this issue in his own day. "If any man cometh unto me," he once said, "and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."[1] Some there were, like Peter and John, who heard his call and obeyed. Others, like the young ruler,[2] found the task too hard. They were attracted to Jesus and would gladly have followed him if the cost of discipleship had not been so great; but the pressure of public opinion and the standards of the circles in which they moved were too strong to resist. So regretfully, but none the less decisively, they turned away.

It has been the same ever since. Still his call comes across the ages: "Follow me!" and men who hear give different answers. Some question his right altogether. There was a time, not so long ago, when the moral supremacy of Jesus could be taken for granted. Now it is challenged in more than one quarter. No single individual, we are told, can express

[1] Luke 14:26. [2] Luke 18:18–23.

the moral ideal for all men. Jesus himself repudiated the claim when he said: "None is good, save one, even God."[1] Moreover, even if we admit that Jesus realized his own moral ideal, his ideal is not ours, since he preached an ascetic, other-worldly morality which has no place for the hard facts of struggle and competition with which our present life is filled. In a world that measures individual success by the size of a man's bank-account, and makes military power the test of national greatness, is it not simple hypocrisy to call Jesus "Lord"?

Others admit his right to their allegiance but find the sacrifice he asks too hard. They believe Jesus when he tells them that love is the greatest thing in the world, but they feel, alas, that it is too great for them. So, with sorrow in their hearts, they choose the easier way.

And there are others who hear the call and obey. They are of every age, and race, and class. It was the love of Jesus which drew St. Francis from his father's house to become a little brother of the poor. It was Jesus who laid hold on Ignatius Loyola and made him the founder of the great society which for centuries has borne the master's name. It was the example of Jesus which inspired Carey and Judson and all the long succession of missionaries, and which sent them as preachers to the ends of the earth. It was in response to the inexorable challenge of his "follow me" that Albert Schweitzer was led to resign his professorship, after years spent in critical study of the life of Jesus, and to go out to central Africa to bring the help of modern medicine to the natives who were dying by hundreds of the sleeping sickness.[2] It is the same call which, in one form or another, comes to every one of us to-day.

[1] Luke 18:19.

[2] Teacher of theology in Strassburg, 1901–1912, author of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Eng. tr., London, 1910). *Cf.* his *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest* (London, 1922), pp. 1, 2.

2. How Christians Have Answered Jesus' Question

Three Ways of Thinking of Jesus

It is, then, a serious matter to ask ourselves what we are to believe about Jesus. Jesus is a master who can tolerate neither reservation nor subterfuge. Unless we are prepared to be perfectly honest with him and with ourselves, it will be better for us to stop here and to go no farther. But if, in spite of hesitation, we feel an inner drawing that we cannot resist and are resolved to follow its leading to the end, we may find suggestions for our further inquiry in the experience of those who have believed on Jesus in the past.

Of the many ways in which his disciples have thought of Jesus, three recur from age to age. They have thought of him as a man like themselves, a historical figure who lived at a definite time and place, yet who was at the same time God's ideal for humanity. They have thought of him as God in man, not only a prophet authorized to speak for God, but God himself entering humanity to share its burdens and to impart to his children his own divine and immortal life. They have thought of him as the Saviour of the world, Lord not only of individuals but of nations, our leader in the quest of social righteousness.

Each of these estimates of Jesus rests upon a fact of human experience; each has found expression in a corresponding doctrine. To understand what Jesus means to the Christian, we must combine all three.

Their Basis in Experience

The fact of experience which lies at the basis of the first thought of Jesus is the extraordinary impression which he produced upon those who came into

contact with him, and still produces. He not only preached the ideal of unselfish service, which in every age has commanded the allegiance of the best men; he also lived it. His disciples believed that he realized God's ideal for man, a life without sin; and his character still appeals to men of the most widely differing viewpoint as the most perfect in the world. "If you wish a rule by which to translate the precepts of ethics from the abstract into the concrete," once said a distinguished moralist, "it would not be easy to do so better than by bidding a man so to live as Jesus would approve."

The fact of experience which lies at the basis of the second thought of Jesus is the transforming effect which faith in him has produced in the lives of men. Jesus is recognized by many who are not Christians as the supreme religious genius of the ages, the one in whom the consciousness of God shone most brightly and the fires of the divine love burned most warmly. But his followers find in him something more. They see in him God's character expressed in terms of human personality. They feel in him God's Spirit working upon their spirits. He not only tells us what man should be; he shows us what God is like, and what he is doing.

The fact of experience which lies at the basis of the third thought of Jesus is the influence which he has exerted not only upon individuals but upon society. He was not only a prophet like Amos or Isaiah. He was the founder of the Christian religion. His ministry gave the first impulse to the new faith and devotion to his person separated his disciples from their Jewish fellow worshippers. To thoughtful men in every age he has commended himself as the moral leader mankind needs, and loyalty to him, however differently conceived, is to-day the bond of union between men who at almost every other point are poles apart.

Their Formulation in Doctrine

The fact that Jesus was a true man, having his place in history, sharing our limitations of time and space, yet transcending these limitations by the perfection of his character, is expressed in the doctrine of the incarnation. The fact that Jesus is the supreme self-manifestation of God, revealing God's purpose for humanity through the expression of his character in terms of human life, is expressed in the doctrine of the deity of Christ. The fact that Jesus reveals God's will for society, as well as for the individuals who compose it, is expressed in the doctrine of the Saviourhood or Messiahship of Christ.

The doctrine of the incarnation calls attention to the fact that God and man are so related that God can reveal himself to man through man. The doctrine of the deity of Christ affirms that through this particular man God shows us what he is like and what he is doing. The doctrine of Christ's Messiahship gives Jesus' person social significance as the Saviour not of individual men and women only but of the world.

We have seen that, in the course of history, these doctrines have often parted company from the experiences to which they owe their origin and have been treated as purely intellectual propositions, which must stand or fall with the systems of thought in terms of which they were originally formulated. But this is to misconceive the nature of Christian doctrine. Doctrines are not simply propositions to be grasped by the mind. They are intellectual symbols which sum up in concise and technical form centuries of personal experience. They recall those special insights and ecstasies which have come to devout men and women in all generations as they have touched Jesus and through him have found God. They are

true as the law of gravitation is true, or as the theory of evolution is true. The law of gravitation can be understood only as we study the way in which it actually works in the world. It expresses itself in ever-changing ways, from the nestling of the snow in the shadowed nook at the foot of the mountain to the pull that holds the planets in their orbits about the sun. The theory of evolution can be understood only in the light of the infinite variety of forms through which life has appeared and reappeared upon the earth, from the most primitive protozoa, preserved as fossils in the rocks of the Protozoic Period, to man. So our doctrines about Jesus Christ are true, not because they present us with final definitions which must be accepted without change as meaning the same thing to all men, but as pointing us to a reality transcending all definition, which each generation must experience for itself. If to many in our generation these doctrines seem abstract and unreal, it is because they have lost this key to their meaning; because they think of them as propositions to be demonstrated by logic or received on authority, rather than as reminders of the infinite variety of experiences which men have had with Jesus Christ. If to others they are beginning to live again, it is because they have begun to test them by Jesus' own method, the method of practical experiment. "If any man willeth to do [God's] will," he said, "he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself."[1] For those who would learn whether Jesus is still the leader the modern world needs, there is no test so efficacious as that which Philip long ago recommended to his brother Nathaniel: "Come and see."[2]

[1] John 7:17.
[2] John 1:46.

3. How Jesus Helps Us to Be Our Best Selves

What It Means to Believe that Jesus Is Very Man

Let us take up, then, one by one, the historic doctrines in which the church has expressed its faith in Christ and ask ourselves what meaning they can still have for us modern men. What does it mean for us, in the first place, that Jesus was man? It means that we must think of him as like us and as unlike us. Like us in that he shared our human nature; unlike us in the use that he made of it. He was our brother; but he was at the same time our example.

Nothing is more remarkable in the New Testament than the parallel which is constantly being drawn between Jesus and his disciples. What he did, they were to do; what he was, they were to be. The work he left undone, they were to carry on. Although his own faith in God was great and the works which it had enabled him to do were mighty, it is a faith which his disciples may share if they will fulfil the conditions. Jesus puts no limits to the possibilities which this faith opens to them. "If ye shall say unto this mountain," he said, "be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done."[1] And again: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father."[2]

To appreciate the significance of this parallelism we must recall the work which Jesus came to do. He came to announce the coming of God's Kingdom and to urge men to prepare themselves for it by repentance. We have already seen what the Kingdom was to be like and what Jesus expected of those who were to be its members. Only the childlike could enter in

[1] Matt. 21:21. [2] John 14:12.

and to be a child of God, as Jesus understood divine sonship, meant to trust, to love, and to serve. Jesus illustrated these qualities supremely in his own person. He was the great lover, first of God, then of men; and because he loved, he understood and sympathized. He saw men not simply as they are, sinful and imperfect, but as they are to be, and he judged their present state by their future destiny. For Jesus, outward conformity was insufficient. Only the pure in heart could see God.[1]

What Jesus expected of others he exacted of himself. He was content with nothing less than the best. After nineteen centuries, we still look up to him as our example. To us, as to the first disciples, he is not only true man, but ideal man.

This is the fact of experience which underlies the doctrine of the incarnation. When we say that Jesus is God incarnate, it is our way of reminding ourselves that, in Jesus, God is teaching us by example. To tell me what I ought to think or what I ought to do is insufficient. I need some one to show me how to think and act as I ought. It is not enough to tell me how I ought to feel or what I ought to be. I need some one who will be the kind of a person that he wants me to be. Bible and church may tell us in words so plain as to admit of no mistake what we must do to be saved. But if there had been no Jesus, the telling would not have sufficed. We must see the ideal life realized in the person of one who has lived it. We must see sin conquered in the person of one who has defeated it. It is example, not words, which inspires us to make the effort for ourselves and gives us confidence that the struggle will not be in vain.

[1] Matt. 5:8.

Different Ways of Conceiving of the Humanity of Jesus

All this we need to have in mind when we contrast our thought of Jesus to-day with that of earlier generations. We sometimes speak as if the fact that Jesus was human was a discovery of our own age, forgetting that from the first the full and complete humanity of Christ has been a cardinal article of Christian faith. The men who wrote the historic creeds fought for it vigorously against the differently minded theologians of their time, just as the modern liberal fights for it to-day. They fought for it not because it was a part of the Christian tradition to which they must pay lip service; they fought for it because it was crucial for their whole conception of salvation. Unless God had really entered humanity in Jesus, unless his human nature possessed in every respect the qualities of ours, our hope of salvation was vain. This hope rested on the fact that in Jesus God had done for humanity as a whole what it was his plan to do for individual men by and by. "He became what we are," said Irenæus, one of the earliest defenders of the full humanity of Jesus, "that he might make us what he is."[1]

The real difference between the older attitude toward Jesus' humanity and that of our own generation is not in the fact that one affirms the humanity of Jesus and the other denies it, but in the different ways in which the affirmation is understood. The men who formulated the creed of Chalcedon thought of humanity as something that existed in and of itself, apart from the human individuals we call men. Jesus, that he might redeem humanity as a whole, had to assume human nature as a whole. But to many

[1] *Adv. Haer.*, bk. I, Preface (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. I, p. 526).

of our contemporaries such a conception has lost its meaning. If Jesus is really to become the saviour of men, then it must be as a man that he meets us, with individual limitations and characteristics. And that is the kind of being we find portrayed in the Gospels. The Jesus of the Gospels is an individual if there ever was one, a Jew not only by birth but by sympathy and affection; a man who knew poverty, hunger, sorrow, defeat; a man tempted as we are, even if, unlike us, he resisted temptation; a man who faced persecution, misunderstanding, failure; a man who loved and suffered because of his love; a man who was betrayed and crucified. If he had not been such a man, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, his triumph over death would have meant little to us. It is his likeness to us, not his difference from us, that gives his resurrection its significance for Paul. Paul does not consider the resurrection of Jesus as an exceptional event never to be repeated. It is the anticipation of an experience which in due time all his disciples are to share. "Christ the firstfruits; afterward, they that are Christ's at his coming."[1]

Just because he was an individual, as you and I are individuals, it is possible for him to be our standard and example. What he did and was under the limitations of his environment, inward and outward, you and I should do and be under the limitations of our environment. The principles he illustrated we must exemplify. The ideals he incarnated, we must embrace. The cause for which he gave his life must command our all.

The interpretation of Jesus' humanity in terms of individuality has seemed to some thinkers to imperil his unique position as the ideal or representative man. So they have explained his moral perfection in a different way. They have attributed it to the fact

[1] I Cor. 15:23.

that he was born of a virgin and so possessed a nature free from the taint of sin. Often they have carried the doctrine of his sinlessness so far as to empty his temptations of all real meaning. Sometimes they have even denied that he suffered as we suffer.

But to prove Jesus' right to be the moral ideal of mankind, we do not have to explain away his human individuality. That right rests upon a foundation which is independent of any explanation which we may give of the origin of his person—namely, the fact of his present continuing power over the hearts and consciences of men. Jesus is humanity's ideal, not because we can prove that he lived all the years of his life without committing sin, but because when we meet him face to face to-day, as Peter met him so many centuries ago, we fall on our knees as Peter did and cry: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"[1]

It is true of the great man always that the final proof of his greatness lies in the impression he produces upon those who come after him. The real Lincoln is not the Lincoln of whom Herndon wrote, the Lincoln of the Springfield law office and of the corner store. He is the Lincoln who has progressively been revealing his spirit to the American people and whose shrine a grateful nation has erected on the banks of the Potomac.

So it is with Jesus. We cannot crowd all of him into the three and thirty years of his earthly life. The most significant of all the facts that go to make up our picture of the historic Jesus is that he is the one who has become the Christ of faith. As the Bible is the story of what the first disciples found in Jesus and what the finding meant in their lives, so the Christian church came into being to make pos-

[1] Luke 5:8.

sible to successive generations such continued acquaintance with Jesus as would make him as truly a means of contact with the living God as he was to the men of the first generation.

How Jesus Helps Us to Be Our Best Selves

When men tell us that no individual can express the ideal of humanity as a whole, the answer is that there is no such thing as an isolated individual. To be a person means to be an individual in whom, for the time being, something universal has made its home. There is in each of us something that aspires, something that looks up, something that outlasts time and change, and in some individuals this universal element acquires majestic proportions. Others look at it and say: "In this man I see my own best self, the man I should like to be; the man I ought to be." I read Shakespeare, and I say: "This man has written the thing I think and should have liked to say if I could." I hear Beethoven, and I say: "This man has voiced the thing I feel and should have liked to express if I could." I look at Jesus, and I say: "Here is a man who convicts me of my sin. He is the man I ought to be and would be if I could."

It is no argument against the central place we give to Jesus that different men find different things in him. He could not be the universal man he is if this were not so. To one man he means this; to another that; but to each he reveals at once the best and the worst in himself. This fact it is which makes his the name which is above every name and gives him a place which is unique.

If, indeed, Jesus had tried to anticipate all the different situations in which men would find themselves or to answer all the different questions which they would ask, his task would have been hopeless. But what he did was something at once simpler and

more important. He showed us the spirit in which we ought to approach each particular situation and gave us principles which are applicable to every conceivable question. If we are told that it is impossible for any single individual to do this for all men, the appeal must lie, not to the men who tell us why Jesus cannot be the model for the philosopher or the artist or the man of affairs, but to the greatest of our race, who have tested him for themselves. To know what philosophers think of Jesus, you must go to Kant or to Spinoza; to know what scientists think about him, you must go to Pasteur; to know what reformers think, you must go to Mazzini; to know what artists think, to Raphael or to Fra Angelico; to know what poets think, to Dante or to Tennyson. If they tell us, as they do, that they have found their ideal in Jesus, what testimony can be more convincing?

We are told that Jesus cannot be the business man's ideal because he takes no account of our present competitive system. Are we so enamoured of this system, with its by-products in poverty, misunderstanding, suspicion, and war, that we should really like to see it indefinitely perpetuated? "Golden Rule" Nash did not think Jesus' ideal impracticable.[1] He tried it in his own business and it worked with extraordinary success.

We are told that Jesus cannot be the scientist's ideal because he was ignorant of science and taught in the popular language of his day. Yet the spirit which Jesus exemplified is the spirit to which science owes its greatest triumphs, the sensitive, receptive

[1] Arthur Nash, of Cincinnati, Ohio, a business man who definitely adopted Jesus' rule of doing unto others as he would be done to as the guiding principle of his business, with interesting results, both personal and financial. For the story of his experiment, *cf.* his book, *The Golden Rule in Business* (New York, 1923).

spirit that is open to every new impression, the outreaching faith which refuses to admit the impossible.

We are told that Jesus cannot be the artist's ideal because he never wrote a poem or painted a picture —Jesus, the greatest artist in words that the world has seen, to whom all nature was vocal with divine meaning and every bird and flower a messenger from God!

We are told that Jesus cannot be the reformer's ideal, since he identified himself with no crusade against any particular social evil, and we can find no law in our statute-books which owes its origin to him—Jesus to whom men in every age who have faced injustice and wrong have turned for inspiration in their struggle against their oppressors! As if it were not a greater thing to make men than to make laws, to inspire reformers than to achieve specific reforms.

We are told that Jesus cannot be the wife's ideal because he was a man; that he cannot be the husband's ideal because he was never married; that he cannot be the old man's ideal because he died at thirty. But an innumerable company of every century and country and race—men and women, married and single, old and young—are ready to-day to bear a contrary witness and to say, out of the depths of a personal experience of Jesus: "Behold the man whom we own as leader, the man in whom we see our ideals made real."

4. What Jesus Means for Our Thought of God

What It Means to Believe in the Deity of Christ

This recurrent experience, always different, yet always the same, the experience of self-discovery which comes to a man when he is in direct contact with Jesus, gives its meaning to the doctrine of the

deity of Christ. It is a meaning which must be experienced in order to be understood and each must experience it in his own way. The doctrine, as we have seen, is only a formula, and a formula is never a substitute for experience, but a symbol, pointing us to the reality of which the experience is to be had. If this be forgotten, the sign may be mistaken for the thing signified and be taken for the end of the journey instead of its beginning.

The doctrine of the deity of Christ is the theologian's way of describing what it means for our thought of God that in Jesus God has given us the supreme disclosure of himself. As the doctrine of the incarnation directs our attention primarily to man and shows us what man will be like when he lets God have his way, so the doctrine of the deity of Christ directs our attention primarily to God and shows us what God is like, as Jesus has helped us to see him.

When we affirm our faith in the deity of Christ, we mean: (1) That Jesus helps us to understand more clearly than we could have done in any other way what God is like, and (2) that he helps to make real to us, as could be done in no other way what God is doing. To believe in the deity of Christ means to make Jesus normative both for our *thought* of God and for our *experience* of God.

In a later chapter we shall discuss in more detail what we can believe about God. There it will be shown how the person of Jesus serves as a symbol by which we make vivid to our imagination what we mean when we call God "righteous" or "merciful" or "loving." Here it is enough to say that the association of Jesus with God puts a new meaning into God's earlier self-revelations and fills the old words in which we have described the deity with a new and richer meaning. Now, for the first time, the world we live in is appreciated at its full significance. We can

think of the natural world as a setting which God has prepared for his approach to men in Jesus, and of human history as the way in which he has been training mankind to meet this approach. Other religions take their place as parts of the preparatory process which finds its fulfilment in Jesus. The sharp differentiation between what we call secular and what we call sacred must fall away. God can use all of life for his purposes. His Spirit can fashion all men after the model which Jesus has set. Each individual, however imperfect or unimportant, is a potential member of the family of which Jesus is the elder brother and a citizen in the Kingdom of which he is the King.

But the contribution of Jesus to our *thought about God* is the least important implication of the doctrine of his deity. God, as religion apprehends him, is never merely an object of thought. He is a *reality to be experienced.* And our association of Jesus with God is justified most of all by this: that he not only helps us to see God more clearly but to realize his presence more intensely. Jesus is not merely teacher, but Saviour. When we touch him, our consciences are stirred and our action changes correspondingly. He is not merely the window through which we look at God; he is the door through which we approach God.

In the light of this experience, the familiar contrast between the religion of Jesus and the religion about Jesus is seen in its true perspective. The antithesis is a false one, for the two conceptions are not exclusive, but supplementary. Such a person as we have seen Jesus to be cannot remain simply our standard of conduct. He must become also the object of our faith. Now that he has come, the world is a different place from what it was before, and we think of God truly, as we think of ourselves truly, only when we take Jesus into account.

Different Ways of Conceiving of God's Presence in Jesus

We have said that the deity of Christ was the theologian's way of reminding us of certain facts which we can verify in experience. Yet as often defined it presents difficulties to many modern men. Jesus has been represented as possessing during his life on earth certain attributes, such as omnipotence and omniscience, not found in any other human being who has lived or ever can live, which together make up what is called his deity.

The motive which has led to this conception of Christ's deity is the desire to safeguard Jesus' uniqueness and sufficiency. But apart from the difficulty of reconciling it with the facts of human limitation which the Gospels present, it fails to do justice to the real reasons on which our faith in his deity rests. As we recognize God's presence in nature not by some particular event or experience which we can pick out and say, "God is here and he is not there," but by a peculiar quality in nature as a whole which lifts our thought above itself to something higher and greater; as we recognize God's presence in history not by some special intervention of deity through miracle or predictive prophecy but through the meaning which we discover in history as a whole and the values, human and divine, which it reveals, so of God's presence in Jesus. We believe that God was in him because of a quality in all that he does which irresistibly suggests God. When we say that we believe in the deity of Christ, we do not mean that God is in Jesus quantitatively, as one can put jewels in a box, but that he is in him qualitatively, as the sun's light is in the sun's rays.

The contrast between these two ways of conceiving of God's presence in Jesus is the result of differing

views of the supernatural. We may think of the supernatural as an extraordinary activity of God which we locate at some definite time or in some definite place because of its contrast to all that precedes and follows it. Or we may think of it as a quality present in all that God does, though revealing itself with special clearness at special times and places. It is not that those who take the first view emphasize the factual basis of Christianity and those who take the second view do not, but that the facts on which one group would found faith lie in the world of sense while for the other group they are facts which lie back of sense and can only be spiritually apprehended.

This contrast comes to most acute expression in the view taken of the person of Jesus. Christians who hold the first view think of Jesus as the great exception. Christians who hold the second view see him as the type to which all must conform. In the first case, the proof of Christ's deity is the group of facts which differentiate him not only from all men actual but from all men possible (*e. g.*, his birth from a virgin mother, his power over nature, his physical resurrection, his ascension into heaven). In the second case, it is the group of facts which show that he is the supreme influence which God is using to make men what they ought to be.

Christians who approach Jesus from these different angles often find it difficult to understand one another. Those who emphasize his likeness to other men are often accused of denying his deity. But while this may be true in some cases, it is by no means always true. One may be keenly alive to the limitations involved in Jesus' humanity and yet none the less convinced that in this human figure God is showing us what he himself is like. For what we need most to know about God is not how he

controls nature or orders history but what is his purpose for us through nature and history. And it is this which Jesus helps us to understand. God's righteousness takes on a new meaning when we remember what Jesus said to the young ruler. God's love receives its supreme illustration in Jesus' death on the cross.

The real test of our loyalty to Jesus lies not in the way we conceive the relation between the divine and the human in his person but in the attitude which we take to that person, however conceived. It is the test which Jesus himself employed when he said: "Not every one that saith unto me 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."[1] The convincing proof that Jesus is really what the church believes him to be—the incarnation of God—is not the number of those who accept the theology of Chalcedon but the steady increase, generation by generation, of those who take Jesus for their master and shape their lives in conformity to his ideals.

5. Is Jesus Still the Leader the Modern World Needs?

What It Means to Call Jesus "Messiah"

This reference to the growing influence which Jesus exerts over the lives of men brings us naturally to the third and last of the three doctrines which express the significance of Jesus for Christian faith —that of his Messiahship or Christhood.

The Messiah, as we have seen, was the leader for whom the people of Israel looked, who should bring deliverance not only to the individual Israelite, or even to Israel as a nation, but to the devout of all nations.[2] When we add to the name "Jesus" the

[1] Matt. 7:21. [2] Matt. 8:11. *Cf.* Isaiah 19:19–25.

qualifying word "Christ," it is our way of saying that we believe that in him this expectation has been fulfilled. Jesus is far more than the ideal man, more than God's revelation to the individual of a Father he can love and trust. He is our leader in our quest for the ideal society, the standard by which we test social progress, and the most powerful single factor in bringing it about.

The significant word here is "society." Jesus not only sets the standard for the individual. He is the leader whom society needs. It is here that the real issue is joined.

Recent events have given us a new realization of what leadership contributes to social progress. The socialistic ideal has been a familiar one for two generations and *Das Kapital* has been read as the Bible of the Marxians. But it was Lenin who made socialism the power it is to-day. Many a patriotic Italian has lamented the decadence of his country and dreamed dreams of a better Italy. But it was not till Mussolini came to fire the imagination of his countrymen that the gap between ideal and fact was bridged and the new Italy was born. Historians may say what they will about the place of economic forces in history; the fact remains that the story of humanity is the story of its great men—Confucius, Alexander, Cæsar, Mohammed, Hildebrand, Dante, Luther, Shakespeare, Loyola, Napoleon, Washington, Lincoln. We are merely carrying an accepted principle one step farther when we date our era from Jesus Christ.

Different Ways of Understanding Jesus' Leadership

In Jesus' own day, as we have seen, people thought of the Messiah in two ways. One group represented the Messiah as a military leader who was to lead his people in a revolt against Rome and regain for them

the political independence which they had lost centuries before. The other regarded him as a supernatural being who was coming in miraculous fashion to bring about an equally supernatural salvation. Each way of thinking stands for an element of truth for which we must make place in any comprehensive social philosophy. The political conception of Messiahship reminds us that our work for society will not be finished until all our institutions, social, economic, political, are informed with the right spirit and express the true ideal. The otherworldly conception reminds us that this present life is too narrow in scope for the complete realization of an adequate social ideal. God is Lord not only of those who are now living but of those who have lived and are still to live, and the beginnings we see here and now must be completed in the larger life after death.

Neither way of thinking is profound enough to penetrate to the heart of our real social problem. Each puts its emphasis upon external factors and bases our hopes of social betterment upon a change in environment. Jesus follows a different method. The sovereignty to which he aspired was inward and spiritual, based upon the response of free spirits to a love that will not let them go. One of the chief reasons why his contemporaries did not recognize Jesus as Messiah was because they did not have this clew. They expected a king like other kings. In the lonely figure whom the seer of Revelation pictures as knocking at the door of the human heart and saying, "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in,"[1] they did not recognize their Lord.[2]

[1] Rev. 3:20.

[2] Not long ago there was translated into English a life of Jesus (*Jesus of Nazareth*, Eng. tr. by Danby, New York, 1925), written in the Hebrew language by a Jew, for Jews. Doctor Joseph Klausner, the author, is one of the most learned of living rabbinical

The Final Test

What the men of his own day thought about Jesus, many of our contemporaries think to-day. They are willing to take him as leader—but on their own terms. Some expect nothing from the present world order and postpone all hope of social progress to another world. Others identify his cause with the victory of some particular programme or institution. Still others despair of any radical transformation of society and confine his sovereignty to the spirits of individual men; while multitudes to whom he is still a stranger see no alternative but a choice between the rival ideals of conflict and renunciation with which he broke during his earthly life. What hope is there that in such a world as this Jesus can ever be supreme?

And all the while in the study of the man of letters, in the classroom of the professor, in the councils of economists and men of business, in the discussions of workmen in the factory or in the mine, by the traveller's side as he takes his solitary way down the In-

scholars, and he wrote the book in order to interpret the real Jesus to his fellow Jews. To any one who wishes to understand the setting of the Gospels, this book may be confidently commended. The author is generous in his appreciation of Jesus, whom he regards not only as a great religious genius but as one of the greatest artists who ever lived. But there are two reasons, he says, why Jesus can never take the place among Jews which Christians give him. One is that he is too much of an internationalist; the other that he carries his doctrine of the divine forgiveness so far as to imperil the divine righteousness. *Cf.* esp. pp. 392 *seq.*, 413 *seq.*

It is interesting to have the accuracy of the Christian view of Jesus confirmed from so high a source. These are, indeed, the two facts on which Christians have always based their claim that Jesus was the founder of a new religion: the fact that Jesus was a thoroughgoing internationalist, and that he gave a new interpretation of the love of God. Whether his right to be the Messiah can be justified will depend in the last analysis upon whether he can win mankind as a whole to his moral requirements on these two points.

dian road,[1] the silent figure makes his presence felt, even by those who do not recognize his name. When, after long waiting, he enters in and takes possession, revolutionary results follow—not only for the individual but for society. More and more our social ideals—I do not say our social practices—are approximating his standards: our ideal for the family, for the school, for the hospital, for social service. In industry a beginning has been made. In politics resistance is more stubborn, but at least the standard has been raised. The spirit of co-operation which alike in state and in church has called into existence the Councils of Geneva and of Stockholm is an eloquent witness to the persuasive influence of the principles of Jesus. "I am not a Christian," said Bernard Shaw recently, "any more than Pilate was. . . . But I am ready to admit, after studying the world of human misery for sixty years, that I see no way out of the world's troubles but the way Jesus would have found, had he undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman."[2]

This growing faith in the power of Jesus' gospel to transform society, as well as the individuals who compose it, is the new note in contemporary religion. It is the form in which faith in Jesus makes its most exacting demand upon heroic spirits of our generation.[3]

Is this faith a reasonable faith? That is for the future to decide. But this we can say with confidence: that if Jesus is to prove himself the leader for whom mankind is waiting, it will be because of the part which love is destined to play in the world-old conflict with evil. This we shall study in the next chapter, which deals with the Christian view of the cross.

[1] *Cf.* Jones, E. Stanley, *The Christ of the Indian Road* (New York, 1925).

[2] Quoted in *Christian Century*, January 19, 1928.

[3] *Cf.* my article, "New Signs in Religion," *Yale Review*, October, 1927.

CHAPTER V

The Christian Way of Overcoming Evil: or What to Believe About the Cross

1. The Lost Sense of Sin and What to Do About It.

   The Mystery of the Cross—The Wide-spread Loss of the Sense of Sin—The Form in Which the Sense of Sin Still Persists.

2. Possible Substitutes for Forgiveness.

   The Method of Forgetfulness—The Method of Redefinition—Beauty as a Substitute for Righteousness.

3. The Cross as the Revelation of the Cost of Love in a World of Sin.

   The Cross as Event and as Principle—The Cross as Man's Offering to God.

4. The Cross as God's Answer to Man's Need for Reassurance.

   The Cross as God's Gift to Man—Different Views of God's Part in Atonement.

5. The Cross as Jesus' Summons to the Sacrificial Life.

   The Cross as Jesus' Summons to His Followers—What the Cross Means for Us To-day.

In the older Protestant theology the doctrine of the Atonement was stated in legal terms. Calvary was conceived as a transaction between God and Christ in which God accepted Jesus' sufferings as a substitute for the penalty due to sin. To-day many feel that personal symbols are more adequate to suggest what really happened. In the cross they see Jesus identifying himself through sympathy with sinful men—taking upon himself the consequences of their sin that through his example of self-sacrificing love he might win them to repentance.

But the crucifixion of Jesus is more than an event in history. It is the revelation of an eternal principle, valid for God as well as for man, and for all ages as well as for the first century. What Jesus experienced on Calvary, that we dare to believe God has always been experiencing. In the cross we see God sharing the cost of sin that he may win his human children to repentance. On no less a love do we ground our assurance of forgiveness. In no less an example do we find our motive for the sacrificial life.

1. The Lost Sense of Sin and What to Do About It

The Mystery of the Cross

When Jesus wished to explain to his disciples the kind of life his followers were to expect, he used a word which must have seemed even stranger to them than it does to us. He told them that his disciples must be cross-bearers. "If any man would come after me," he said, "let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."[1] In these words he foreshadowed the experience which was presently to be his own. Jesus, as we have seen, was the promised Messiah, but he was a Messiah who mounted to his throne from a cross.

From that day to this the cross has held a central place in the thought of his followers. It has become the distinctive symbol of the Christian, as the crescent is of the followers of Mohammed. In Catholic cathedrals at the great altar; in Protestant churches on the spire or over the communion-table; in the cell of the religious; at the wayside shrine; pendant on the breast of some cardinal or archbishop; printed on the cover of Bible or prayer-book, the mark that separates it from books that are secular; everywhere we find the cross. One can think of Christianity without many things—without churches, or priests, or creeds, or ritual—one cannot think of Christianity without the cross.

Ubiquitous as it is, it is always mysterious, a challenge both to the intellect and to the conscience of man. Why did the good Christ die and, of all places, on the cross? What does his death mean for humanity as a whole? And what in particular does it mean

[1] Luke 9:23.

for me? These are questions with which in every age the mind of man has been wrestling; and the outcome of this wrestling has come down to us as the doctrine of the Atonement. Like the deity of Christ, it presents difficulties to the modern mind. Like that doctrine, it points to a fact which is basic in the Christian philosophy of life, the fact that man needs forgiveness, and that forgiveness can only be had at a cost both to God and to man.

The Wide-spread Loss of the Sense of Sin

Yet the extraordinary thing is that there are many people in our day who do not seem to feel at all the need of forgiveness. One of the outstanding characteristics of contemporary religion is a loss of the sense of sin. Religion is commended for a great many reasons—economic, æsthetic, practical. But the reason which commended it to Paul and which he made central in his gospel is rarely made prominent to-day. You will hear ministers preaching about almost everything except the forgiveness of sins. You will find members of the congregation going to their pastor for advice on every subject under heaven except how to save their souls.

This fact is the more remarkable because it is so short a time since sin and salvation were the staples of Christian preaching. The denominations might differ on almost everything else, but on this they were agreed: that man was a sinner and needed forgiveness, and that forgiveness had been made possible by the atonement of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

In part this shifting of emphasis may be explained as a natural reaction against the exaggerations of the older doctrines of total depravity and original sin. When Horace Bushnell [1] protested against the

[1] In his well-known book, *Christian Nurture,* which was written in 1846.

view that in order to be saved every human being must be expected to experience a conversion like that of Saint Paul, and insisted that in the great majority of cases we ought to expect a child born in a Christian home to grow up a Christian, he was reasserting essential Christian truth. But Bushnell believed in the fact of sin and in the need of forgiveness just as sincerely as Calvin or Wesley. The situation we face to-day has radically changed. It is not the nature of salvation which is questioned, but the need of it.

No single reason is sufficient to account for this change. The general acceptance of the theory of evolution, with its emphasis upon growth as the law of life and its derivation of man from a non-human ancestry, has no doubt had something to do with it. More important factors are the present easy-going attitude toward life, the rapid increase of freedom, the breaking down of accepted standards, the multiplication of the number of those who live comfortable lives and are spared contact with the uglier and more repulsive side of human life. A home like many a modern home, where children are denied nothing; a college like many a modern college, where study is but an incident in a life devoted to having a good time, are not the best soils in which to grow a conviction of sin. The old word "repentance" rings strange in our ears. It is more natural for some of us to pray the Pharisee's prayer than the publican's.

The Form in Which the Sense of Sin Still Persists

It is more natural for ourselves. But it still seems to many of us quite fitting that other people should pray as the publican did. I may not feel that it is necessary for me to repent of anything, but there are plenty of my neighbors of whose need of repentance I am acutely conscious. It is not so much that our

modern age has lost the sense of sin as that we have developed a technic by which we are able to detach the sense of sin from ourselves and fasten it upon those whom we dislike and of whom we disapprove—big business men, for example, or wicked imperialists, or corrupt labor leaders. What we call the social gospel, originally designed to make the sense of sin more keen by extending it to new relations, is often used as a device for locating sin elsewhere than in ourselves.

We had a vivid illustration of this transfer of responsibility during the war. There was no doubt then in anybody's mind that a great sin had been committed and that repentance was needed. But it was not England or France or Russia or Italy who had sinned, least of all the United States—but Germany. Those who were living in Germany at the time would have heard Germans saying the same thing of the Allies.

Recently a book came into my hands called *The A B C of Communism.*[1] It is a text-book which is used in the schools of the party to instruct young revolutionists in the principles of the new social order. From beginning to end it is based upon a philosophy in which the desire for gain is regarded as natural to man, and everything that happens is given an economic interpretation. Religion in its conventional form is ruled out of court, and appeal is made to reason as the supreme authority. If there are to be found anywhere on earth persons of whom one might feel confident that they had done away with the conception of moral blameworthiness altogether, it would be the authors of this book. Yet it is a conception which we find them constantly using. For themselves, indeed, and those who think like them, there is no

[1] By Bucharin, N., and Preobraschensky, B. (Moscow, 1917; Eng. tr., Detroit, 1921).

such thing as guilt. But when the wicked bourgeois appears on the scene (and he is never long absent) the tone suddenly changes. He, it seems, has been guilty of shameful conduct and is condemned as an enemy of the people. Even Soviet Russia can recognize sin in others.

What a contrast to the attitude of Jesus! He preached repentance for oneself, forgiveness for others. If we are to live the life he lived, we must recover his attitude toward sin. We must face the facts as he faced them and deal with them as he dealt with them, and first of all in ourselves.

And by "sin" we mean just what religious teachers have always meant by it—the choice of the lower, rather than the higher, in all the countless forms that this choice may take. As long as man is a moral being, accepting standards of better or worse; as long as man is a social being, facing the choice between self-indulgence and service; as long as man is a religious being, hearing in the warnings of conscience the voice of One greater than himself, he will experience the fact of sin, if not in himself, at least in others, and be compelled to deal with it.

2. Possible Substitutes for Forgiveness

The Method of Forgetfulness

There are various ways in which a man may deal with sin. He may deal with it by the method of forgetfulness. He may close his eyes to the ugly fact and its uglier consequences, and find in pleasure or business or simple motion an anodyne that brings temporary forgetfulness. If only forgetfulness were a cure! But as long as sin is here, its consequences will continue in the hardening of individual character and in social demoralization. And the fact that we do not realize what is happening at the time will not prevent an inevitably rude awakening.

In Mrs. Wharton's novel *Twilight Sleep*[1] she reminds us of one of the ways in which the awakening may occur. She is describing the experience of a girl whose mother, a woman of large means and many social responsibilities, had been practising the method of forgetfulness with apparently complete success:

"There were moments when Nona felt oppressed by responsibilities and anxieties not of her age, apprehensions that she could not shake off and yet had not enough experience of life to know how to meet. One or two of her girl friends—in the brief intervals between whirls and thrills —had confessed to the same vague disquietude. It was as if, in the beaming determination of the middle-aged, one and all of them, to ignore sorrow and evil, "think them away" as superannuated bogies, survivals of some obsolete European superstition unworthy of enlightened Americans, to whom plumbing and dentistry had given higher standards, and bifocal glasses a clearer view of the universe—as if the demons the elder generation ignored, baulked of their natural prey, had cast their hungry shadow over the young. After all, somebody in every family had to remember now and then that such things as wickedness, suffering, and death had not yet been banished from the earth; and with all those bright-complexioned white-haired mothers mailed in massage and optimism, and behaving as if they had never heard of anything but the Good and the Beautiful, perhaps their children had to serve as vicarious sacrifices. There were hours when Nona Manford, bewildered little Iphigenia, uneasily argued in this way: others when youth and inexperience reasserted themselves, and the load slipped from her, and she wondered why she didn't always believe, like her elders, that one had only to be brisk, benevolent, and fond to prevail against the powers of darkness."

The poets, too, as well as the novelists, remind us that it is not so easy to forget as we would wish:

"Good and bad and right and wrong!
Wave the silly words away!
This is wisdom—to be strong!
This is virtue—to be gay!

[1] New York, 1927, p. 47.

Let us sing and dance, until
We shall know the final art;
How to banish good and ill
With the laughter of the heart!"[1]

"Let us banish good and ill!" Wise advice, indeed, if they would only stay banished. Forgetfulness would do very well if we could keep on forgetting. But time plays tricks upon us. When we feel most secure, we are apt to meet with some unpleasant surprise. The same poet who wrote *The Dance* has written another poem called *Time's Revenge:*[2]

"Once on a time he would have said
—Not all the ghouls of sorcery
Can make me hang a craven head
Nor shake a whimper out of me.

. . . . . .

But now a night-hag hath me down!
And I am staring, suddenly,
As one who wakens from renown
To staring notoriety—

The king his diadem shall wear!
The half-king wear what gaud he can
Until Time swings him by the hair,
No king at all, and scarce a man!"

The Method of Redefinition

One may deal with sin by the method of redefinition. One may say, this thing we call sin is just a case of misunderstanding, or at most, of maladjustment. Sin is the survival of the animal in man. It belongs to an outgrown stage of our development. There is no such thing as sin, but only certain feelings of fear and shame that have attached themselves to certain inherited standards. Let us detach these feelings from their association with these outworn ideas. Let us treat them as Christian Science treats disease. Let us

[1] Stephens, James, *Collected Poems* (New York, 1926), p. 18.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 157.

bow them out of the world as illusion, and all will be well.

And if they were really no more than illusions, this would be a very satisfactory way to deal with them. But just as the illusion we call sickness is followed by the still more unpleasant illusion we call death, so the illusion we call sin has consequences which are disastrous. Broken hearts and wrecked lives, enslaving habits and seared consciences, jaded appetites and dulled sensibilities are facts of which we have to take account. There are more ways of dying than one. "She that giveth herself to pleasure," said a shrewd observer long ago, "is dead while she liveth."[1]

When people talk in their easy modern way of getting rid of the idea of sin, it sets us wondering if they realize what they are saying. By all means, let us get rid of sin if we can. If sin is simply the creature of a diseased imagination, something we have conjured up to torment ourselves and frighten others, let us by all means have done with it, and the sooner the better. But let us realize clearly what we are doing. In parting with the idea of sin, we are separating ourselves not only from the theologians but also from the poets and the dramatists. Shakespeare must be left behind, as well as Saint Augustine, and Euripides as well as Saint Paul.

And even if we are willing to let them go, there are other facts which may give us pause. The gospel of doing as you please has its drawbacks; if not for us, at least for other people. The consciousness of falling below one's own ideal may be unpleasant to be sure, but it is incomparably less unpleasant than the consciousness of having no ideal to fall below. The recent increase of student suicides would seem to show that emptiness may be as bitter an experience as remorse.

[1] I Tim. 5:6.

Beauty as a Substitute for Righteousness

An American university professor, writing in *Harpers Magazine*[1] has suggested that we need a substitute for righteousness. The old idea of duty, she tells us, has gone forever, and it has left an empty place that cries aloud to be filled. She proposes beauty as a possible substitute. Let us do the right thing, not because it is right, but because it is fitting, the kind of thing that a self-respecting person would do. Men who have little respect for law have died for honor.

One can sympathize with this suggestion, but we should be clear as to just what it may mean. There is a beauty of which the Bible speaks which is moral through and through. It is the thrill that comes to us when we realize that glorious as are the laws that govern the physical universe and account for its marvellous harmony and beauty, they are less wonderful than the laws which govern the spiritual universe and determine the relation of a man to his fellow men. It is the beauty that Kant recognized when he said: "Two things fill the mind with admiration and awe: the starry heavens above and the moral law within."[2] It is the beauty that Wordsworth recognized when he called duty "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God."[3] It is the beauty that Bushnell recognized when, in the crisis that he called his conversion, as he sat alone in his tutor's room at Yale College facing the question of what he was to do with his life, he realized that whatever else may be doubtful this at least is certain, that it is always right to do right, and then and there accepted the principle of right as the law of his life to be served at any cost whatever.[4]

[1] Carlson, A. D., "Wanted, a Substitute for Righteousness," January, 1927.

[2] Kant, I., *Critique of Practical Reason,* Eng. tr. by Abbot, T. K., fourth ed. (London, 1889), p. 260.

[3] *Ode to Duty.*

[4] *Cf.* Munger, T. T., *Horace Bushnell, Preacher and Theologian* (New York, 1899), pp. 23–27.

Religion is too high and sacred a thing to be confined within the limits of a code of law. It is something vital and spontaneous, like our delight in art or our response to the claims of honor. But it is none the less moral for that. We need to free ourselves from the idea of God's law as a statute imposed upon us from without and to substitute that of his spirit as a principle governing life from within. This is what Jesus meant when he talked about the childlike spirit. This is the great discovery Saint Paul made when he broke once for all with the law as the test of righteousness and entered on the life of faith.

When, by one path or another, we come to the place where we see what these predecessors of ours have seen, the whole matter of right and wrong takes on a new meaning. Right becomes something we discover within ourselves, and with right goes always the possibility of wrong. The words of Jesus about sin and forgiveness are now seen to point to realities which man cannot escape. And to those who have made this discovery and are facing these realities, the cross appears as a challenging fact to which they must needs adjust themselves.

3. The Cross as the Revelation of the Cost of Love in a World of Sin

The Cross as Event and as Principle

We saw in a previous chapter that every Christian doctrine is a sign-post pointing us to some reality which has practical significance for our lives. To understand the doctrine, therefore, we must not only perceive what that reality is; we must relate ourselves to it in some personal way. This does not mean that the reality does not exist apart from us, a fact as objective and irremovable as the sun that gives us light or the earth on which we stand, but only that to ap-

preciate its significance we must find some point of contact with it in our own lives. This, true of all other Christian doctrines, is pre-eminently true of the doctrine of the cross.

We may define the cross in simple language as God's method of overcoming sin by a love that shares. It is a method of inwardness, a new spirit or attitude both on God's part and on man's part. Atonement is not something that happens to God. It is something that happens in God; and because this is true of God, it is true also of man. Of man, too, it is true that atonement is primarily not something done for him from without, but something that happens within him.

It follows that, in the cross, we have to do not simply with a fact but with a principle. The cross is not something that happened once for all and was done with. You cannot crowd all of God into a moment of time, though a moment of time may be sufficient to give you an insight into what God is always doing. After that moment has come, you will see him where you had not known he was at work and discover divine meanings in things that happen to you every day. The crucifixion of Jesus was such a moment. It was a revelation of the heart of God.

The event itself, to eyes which have not been opened to see its divine meaning, seems capable of a quite simple and intelligible explanation. There was nothing in what happened to Jesus for which the historians cannot find a sufficient reason in the events which preceded it. The enthusiasm of the disciples, the jealousy of the Pharisees, the cynicism of the Romans, the fickleness of the crowd—each has its part to play in the tragedy. But faith sees more in the death of Jesus than the fate which overtook a misguided enthusiast. On the cross it sees Jesus, the best of men, submitting to suffering, shame, and death on

behalf of sinful humanity. It sees more than this. It sees God himself sharing the sorrows and bearing the sin of the world.

Like every other experience through which Jesus passed, we may think of the cross from the point of view of the man who experienced it or of God, whom the experience revealed.

The Cross as Man's Offering to God

Considered as a human experience, the cross may be understood as the response of humanity, in the person of its choicest representative, to God's demand upon men for penitence and obedience. Jesus, though himself conscious of no sin, identified himself with sinful men in sympathy. He foresaw the consequences that were coming upon them because of their sins, and he acknowledged that it was right that they should come. He knew that nothing stood between them and God's forgiveness but repentance, and he became so one with them in sympathy that he could make the needed confession in their name. On the cross—to use McLeod Campbell's striking phrase—Jesus uttered humanity's "Amen" to God's judgment of sin.[1] He did this not alone for the misguided publicans, he did it for the Pharisees. His hard words in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew were wrung out of him by the intensity of his vicarious suffering. We get our most profound glimpse into his heart in the agonized cry that follows: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"[2]

That is what love is always doing. It identifies itself with the loved one, suffers in his sorrows, re-

[1] *The Nature of the Atonement* (New York, 1886), p. 117.
[2] Matt. 23:37.

joices in his joys, feels shame over his failures, repents of his sins. Love is by its very nature vicarious. It breaks down the wall between person and person. It makes us, in a very real sense, one with the one who is loved.

And when that loved one is sinful, love takes its color accordingly. It feels what the loved one would feel if he were his own best self. It feels what the loved one will some day feel when he comes to himself. If repentance is needed, love will repent. If confession is in order, love will confess. If confession and repentance cost shame and suffering, love will bear the reproach and endure the pain. What fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, friends and patriots are doing every day, Jesus did supremely, and did for us all.

In doing this, Jesus did just what God desired him to do. What gives his experience on Calvary its atoning quality in God's sight is its moral quality as obedience, not its penal character as suffering. Suffering is the price which Jesus paid in order to be obedient in a world of sin.

This moral quality in Christ's sufferings gives them also their power to move the hearts of men. There is nothing in suffering itself which saves. It may as easily harden as purify. We have seen it do so in our own experience and in the experience of those we love. Christ's suffering was redemptive because it was the expression of love, and love is the only power strong enough to subdue a rebellious will.

But it may be asked: "How can the experience of Christ avail for others? Must not each man do his own repenting and his own obeying?" There is a very real sense in which this is true. The obedience of Christ on Calvary is not intended to be a substitute for our obedience, but to help make it possible. When we see him identifying himself with sinful

humanity, accepting as part of his lot as a member of the human family the suffering and death which came to him as a result of others' sins, it becomes easier for us to render to God the obedience which is our due. We, in our turn, realize, as we could realize in no other way, what our sin is costing others, and, as a result, we repent and obey.

4. The Cross as God's Answer to Man's Need for Reassurance

The Cross as God's Gift to Man

In taking this view of the cross, are we not reducing the Atonement to human terms, making it simply the greatest example of what many men are doing, of what we all ought to do? Does Calvary save us merely by the moral transformation which it brings about in us? It was not so that Cromwell thought of the Atonement. To him the cross brought an assurance independent of anything that man could do. It spoke of a "transaction between God and Christ"—a covenant "sure and steadfast" upon which he could pin his faith in times of moral weakness and despair.[1] Has all this dropped out of our modern thought of the Atonement? Has the whole thing been reduced to a mere moral influence?

By no means. Only we must look for our assurance in the right place. It is not on the figure of the human Jesus that we base our faith, but on the living God, who is revealed in him. To Christians, as we have seen,

[1] *Cf.* his letter to General Fleetwood, June 22, 1655: "Dear Charles, my dear love to thee; and to my dear Biddy (his daughter) who is a joy to my heart, for what I hear of the Lord in her. Bid her be cheerful, and rejoice in the Lord once and again; if she knows the Covenant, she cannot but do so. For that Transaction is without her; sure and stedfast, between the Father and the Mediator in His blood. . . . We, under all our sins and infirmities, can daily offer a perfect Christ; and thus we have peace and safety, and apprehension of love, from a Father in Covenant —who cannot deny Himself. And truly in this is all my salvation; and this helps me to bear my great burdens."

Jesus is not simply the ideal man, but the one who shows us what God is like. In the cross we see God entering into our human experience, taking upon himself the burden of our sin, identifying himself with its consequences in sorrow and shame, so that by his revelation of a love that anticipates repentance, he may win us to the life for which from the beginning we were designed. The cross is not simply the supreme example of human self-sacrifice. It is the revelation of the heart of God.

The fact that God participates in Jesus' experience gives us the reason for our assurance. It is God's pledge to us that his love, which is willing to pay so great a price, will triumph in the end.

Different Views of God's Part in Atonement

In his book *Christianity and Liberalism*[1] Professor J. Gresham Machen uses the doctrine of the Atonement as a test case to illustrate the difference between Fundamentalists and Modernists, or, as he prefers to call them, Christians and liberals. The passage is so instructive that it is worth quoting in full. "The Christian doctrine of the atonement," he tells us, "is rooted in the Christian doctrine of the deity of Christ. The reality of an atonement for sin depends altogether upon the New Testament presentation of the Person of Christ. And even the hymns dealing with the Cross which we sing in church can be placed in an ascending scale according as they are based upon a lower or higher view of Jesus' person. At the very bottom of the scale is that familiar hymn:

> "'Nearer, my God, to thee,
> Nearer to thee!
> E'en though it be a cross
> That raiseth me.'

[1] New York, 1923, pp. 126–128.

That is a perfectly good hymn. It means that our trials may be a discipline to bring us nearer to God. The thought is not opposed to Christianity; it is found in the New Testament. But many persons have the impression, because the word 'cross' is found in the hymn, that there is something specifically Christian about it, and that it has something to do with the gospel. This impression is entirely false. In reality, the cross that is spoken of is not the Cross of Christ, but our own cross; the verse simply means that our own crosses or trials may be a means to bring us nearer to God. It is a perfectly good thought, but certainly it is not the gospel. One can only be sorry that the people on the *Titanic* could not find a better hymn to die by than that.

"But there is another hymn in the hymn-book:

> " 'In the Cross of Christ I glory,
> Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
> All the light of sacred story
> Gathers round its head sublime.'

That is certainly better. It is here not our own crosses but the Cross of Christ, the actual event that took place on Calvary, that is spoken of, and that event is celebrated as the centre of all history. Certainly the Christian man can sing that hymn. But one misses even there the full Christian sense of the meaning of the Cross; the Cross is celebrated but is not understood.

"It is well, therefore, that there is another hymn in our hymn-book:

> " 'When I survey the wondrous Cross
> On which the Prince of Glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride.'

There at last are heard the accents of true Christian feeling—'the wondrous Cross on which the Prince of

Glory died.' When we come to see that it was no mere man who suffered on Calvary but the Lord of glory, then we shall be willing to say that one drop of the precious blood of Jesus is of more value, for our own salvation and for the hope of society, than all the rivers of blood that have flowed upon the battle-fields of history." So far Professor Machen.

No Modernist would have written this passage in just the way that Professor Machen has written it; yet it expresses an insight which many a Modernist shares. "When we come to see that it was no mere man who suffered on Calvary but the Lord of glory," then, and not until then, will we understand what the cross has meant for multitudes of Christians. Unless Christ's suffering on Calvary was more than a mere example of human heroism, unless it was the revelation in human form of some deep principle inwrought into the nature of things, unless in this whole matter of redemption through suffering God himself is concerned, what hope is there of any future for civilization? What guaranty that all the sacrifices of all the heroes and martyrs will not have been in vain?

That God was in some true sense a sharer in Christ's suffering has been the faith of the church from the first. This is the fixed point in the mystery we call the Atonement, the basic fact to which faith witnesses, the place from which Fundamentalist and Modernist alike start. Modern theologians accept the fact of the Atonement. They try to explain it, not to explain it away. Explain it, did I say? Rather to render it less unintelligible. Wherever we touch God, we touch mystery. Between the human and the divine there hangs a curtain which can never be lifted. The most we can hope is to use human analogies to suggest what goes on behind the veil. The older Protestant theologians used the analogy of law and penalty to interpret the cross. They thought of Jesus as our

substitute, paying the penalty required of us by divine justice. To-day, we feel that no merely legal phraseology can do justice to what Jesus experienced. If we must choose, we find personal analogies more helpful, such as that of father and child or of friend and friend. But in the one case as in the other, we are dealing with symbols suggesting more than they can express. The reality to which the symbol points is the fact that no good thing can be had without cost, and the more precious a thing is, the more it costs. There is forgiveness of sin, but not without a price. And the price of forgiveness is vicarious suffering.

This great principle of salvation by cost the Bible carries back to God himself. Professor Machen is right when he tells us that the deity of Christ and the Atonement belong together. If Jesus does not reveal to us in his human personality the heart and mind of God, then Christianity has been on the wrong track from the first. Our preaching is vain and our faith is vain. But if the sympathy that made Christ suffer for sinners is not human simply, but divine, if the principle of vicarious sacrifice is inwrought into the very nature of things and appears in man because it was first in God, then indeed we may take heart and be comforted. Then for us the supreme transvaluation of values has taken place. The cross which to the man of the world, now as in Paul's day, is a stumbling-block and to the intellectual is foolishness, has become for us the power of God and the wisdom of God. And with this transformation the meaning of all human suffering has been changed.

5. The Cross as Jesus' Summons to the Sacrificial Life

The Cross as Jesus' Summons to His Followers

I say, the meaning of all human suffering has been changed; for what the man Jesus did for the sinners

of his day he asks us to do for the sinners of our day. What Jesus suffered on Calvary, he suffered not simply as our substitute, but as our representative. Not to see this is to miss one of the most obvious teachings of the New Testament, Jesus' invitation to his disciples to share his vicarious suffering. He asks us to take up our cross and follow him, not because there is anything lacking in our salvation that human merit must add to divine compassion, but that we may help to reconcile men and women who are still estranged.

We do well to emphasize the difference between the trials which come to us through the ordinary discipline and limitations of life and the sorrow that broke Christ's heart on Calvary. But in the measure that we grow in his fellowship, that difference will grow less. The sorrows that affect ourselves alone will grow less and less. The burdens of the world's sin will oppress us more and more. Saint Paul did not hesitate to say that he filled up in his own flesh that which was lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the church.[1] The Roman Catholic Church was respecting a sound instinct when it associated the sufferings of the saints with the sacrifice of Christ, and a grateful humanity has added to the official calendar the name of many a heroic spirit who would be surprised to find himself in such company.

So we would add to Professor Machen's three hymns a fourth, which is necessary to bring out the Christian doctrine of Atonement in its completeness:

"Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for every one,
And there's a cross for me."

What the Cross Means for Us To-day

What this may mean in the lives of individual men

[1] Col. 1:24.

finds dramatic illustration in a recent book by George Stewart called *The Crucifixion in Our Street*.[1] In it he recalls some of the ways in which those who are trying to follow in the footsteps of Christ are finding that they lead them to the cross. Sometimes the discovery comes in open and dramatic ways, as it came to William Lloyd Garrison and the early Abolitionists; sometimes in solitude, through the heart-break of their own souls; and it would be hard to tell which form of the cross is harder to bear.

"When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged Him on a tree,
They drave great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary;
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were His wounds and deep,
For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham they simply passed Him by,
They never hurt a hair of Him, they only let Him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give Him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do,'
And still it rained the winter rain that drenched Him through and through;
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary."[2]

If we wish to win back our lost sense of sin, we must follow Jesus' method. It will do us little good to turn our thoughts in upon ourselves and try to conjure up

[1] New York, 1927.

[2] Studdert-Kennedy, G. A. (Woodbine Willy), *Rough Rhymes of a Padre*, quoted in *Redemption: An Anthology of the Cross*, ed. Stewart, George (New York, 1927), p. 268.

a sense of guilt we do not really feel. Let us rather forget ourselves altogether and think of the cause to which Jesus has called us, the cause of all the oppressed and heart-sick the round world over. Let us make earnest with his discipleship and it will not be long before we shall find ourselves facing the obstacles which he faced and begin to understand what he meant when on the cross he said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[1]

The cry of earth's anguish went up unto God,—
. . . . . .
"Lord, take away pain from the world Thou hast made,
That it love Thee the more."

Then answered the Lord to the world He had made,
Shall I take away pain?
And with it the power of the soul to endure
Made strong by the strain?
Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart
And sacrifice high?
Will ye lose all your heroes who lift from the flame
White brows to the sky?
Shall I take away love that redeems with a price
And smiles through the loss,—
Can ye spare from the lives that would climb unto mine
The Christ on His Cross?"[2]

[1] Luke 23:34.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 318.

CHAPTER VI

The Christian's Reason for Happiness: or What to Believe About God

1. Two Ways of Knowing God.

   Can Man Have Intercourse with God?—The Argument from Reason—The Argument from Experience.

2. How Happiness Comes and Why It Stays.

   The Lack of Happiness in Contemporary Religion—How Happiness Comes and Why It Stays—Why So Many Religious People Are Not Happy.

3. What Jesus Helps Us to See in God.

   What Jesus Takes Over from the Thought of the Past—God as Ultimate Reality—God as Immanent Spirit—God as Ideal Personality—What Jesus Contributes to Our Thought of God.

4. The God of Religion and the God of Theology.

   The Trinity as the Theologian's Way of Describing God—Different Ways of Conceiving of the Trinity.

5. The Practice of the Presence of God as the Christian Way to Happiness.

   The Practice of the Presence of God—How God Satisfies Our Need of Happiness.

Men have thought of God as Creator of the universe, as indwelling Spirit, and as ideal Personality. All these ways of thinking of God, Jesus takes over, but he gives them new meaning and emphasis. Above all, he illustrates in his own person the qualities in God's character which justify us in calling him "Father." To his followers, Jesus is the supreme revelation of God.

This more intimate and personal conception of God finds theological expression in the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity is more than a mystery received on the authority of the church. It is more than a theological doctrine about God's nature. It is a symbol which reminds us that through all the phases of our varying experience it is one and the same God with whom we have to do. Whether we contemplate physical nature, study human history, or look into the depths of our own soul, everywhere we meet God, the eternal yet ever changing, and wherever we find him he is the same loving Father with whom Jesus has made us acquainted. His service opens to us a field of activity which affords scope for every power. His love introduces us into the fellowship of all who are living the life of love. Above all, he is himself the thing we most value and admire. To perceive this and live by what we see is highest happiness.

1. Two Ways of Knowing God

Can Man Have Intercourse with God?

Each subject which we have thus far considered has brought us into touch with the central fact of religion, the fact of God. Whether we have tried to understand ourselves, or the world we live in, or the Christ who is our Master, or the cross on which he died, we have found ourselves before we were through, in the presence of this Supreme Reality. It is God, as we have seen, in whom alone we find the Master whose service is perfect freedom. It is God whose presence alike in star-dust and in the heart of man gives the world its meaning and its value. It is God whose character we see revealed in the person of the man Christ Jesus. It is he whose heart of love has been made known to us on the cross.

But thus far our approach to this great Reality has been indirect. We have met him here and there on the way as we have been travelling along familiar paths. It remains to gather these scattered insights into an ordered whole.

When we touch God, we touch the central fact of religion, but at the same time its most difficult problem—the fact and the problem of intercourse between the human and the divine. It is the central fact because it is of the essence of personal religion that there should be such intercourse. It is at the same time the most difficult problem because there are so many things which make it hard to believe that such intercourse can take place.

There have been religions, and in every religion there have been individuals, that have felt no need of

a God who could have intercourse with man. Whatever initiative they have recognized in religion has been on man's part, not on God's. Man may lift his eyes in adoration and his voice in praise, but he must expect no response from God. The worshipper should be content to contemplate the Ever-Blessed from afar; to rejoice in the distant reflection of his glory. It is not for man, finite and imperfect, creature of time and sense, to enter the holy of holies, reserved for God alone.[1]

Jesus, on the other hand, made of fellowship the very heart of religion. Without initiative on God's part and response on man's, Fatherhood and Sonship would lose their meaning. If God be in truth our Father, he must make his presence known to us in definite and unmistakable ways. He must speak and we must hear; he must act and we must see him acting; he must invite and we must accept his invitation. For Jesus, God is the great Companion.

The facts that make it difficult to believe that man can have intercourse with God fall into two groups: one having to do with the structure of the universe, the other with its outcome. We have already met them in our study of the world in which we live. It will be enough briefly to recall them here.

The first group of facts includes all the data marshalled by the physical sciences which lead us to think of the universe not as a living creature, but as a mechanism. The second group of facts include all the data known to us only too intimately in our own personal experience which lead us to question whether the power which is responsible for the outcome of things is in fact good.

Neither of these groups of facts is in itself suffi-

[1] "He who truly loves God," says Spinoza, "cannot wish that God should love him in return." Santayana, G., *Three Philosophical Poets* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 56.

cient to invalidate our faith in the good God who makes his presence known to man. But each creates difficulties which we must frankly face if our faith is to be strong and free.

The Argument from Reason

The first difficulty, being pre-eminently one for the reason, must be met by argument. We must show that far from mechanism being inconsistent with personality, it is the indispensable instrument through which personality functions; that apart from personality indeed, the world of mechanism, as science pictures it to us, would be unintelligible.

The second difficulty, being pre-eminently one for the emotions, must be met by experience. We must show that the evil in the universe is not necessarily inconsistent with the power and control of the good God, but may even be so used as to serve moral ends otherwise unattainable.

I can only suggest the outline of the first argument. Those who wish a fuller statement will find it in Canon Streeter's book *Reality*, to which reference has already been made.[1] In this book Streeter points out that all we know of ultimate reality must necessarily be described in symbols; that these symbols are furnished to us by our own experience; that mechanism and personality are alike figures of speech, which have meaning only for persons like ourselves; that, of the two, mechanism is the less direct and, therefore, the less illuminating; that science itself can give us an intelligible account of the universe which it professes to describe only by supplementing its use of mechanical symbols by personal symbols. The difficulty here is the same difficulty which we met in connection with our own personality and it must be dealt

[1] P. 14.

with in the same way. We must reason from that which is more certain to that which is less; from that of which we have direct evidence to that which is inferred. That which is most certain is our own personality. Science may help us to understand more exactly of what elements it is composed and how these elements function; but it has no right to make the outcome of their functioning other than it is, a living organism with its hopes and fears, its aspirations and its ideals, its capacity for indefinite improvement, its power "to make of its dead self a stepping-stone to higher things." It is through personality, and through personality alone, that we reach the concept of mechanism.[1] We cannot abandon the one without destroying the other also.

There is nothing, then, in the physicist's conception of nature which makes it unreasonable to picture God, the ultimate reality who expresses himself through nature, by the symbol of personality. Of all the words we can use to describe what this reality must be like, this is the least misleading. God may be more than person; he may be other than person; he cannot be less than person. No word that is less than personality can so fittingly suggest what our experience of his working shows him to be.

But it is not sufficient to show that there is a God who can reveal himself to men. It is necessary to show that he actually does so. This has always been the conviction of religious people and they have pointed, in proof of their faith, to particular experiences of their own—voices they have heard, sights they have seen, mysterious and otherwise unaccountable acces-

[1] *Cf.* Streeter, B. H., *Reality*, p. 2: "In origin Mechanism is an abstract quality corresponding to the concrete thing machine; that is to say, it is a quality, not of any object existing in Nature, but of certain artificial constructions made by man. Hence to apply the conception to Nature in anything like its original sense is to be guilty of anthropomorphism in a double degree."

sions of wisdom and power which have come to them at the time of their greatest need. We have elsewhere considered the reasons for this conviction and concluded that, in spite of the difficulties which attach to a certain way of defining the miraculous or supernatural factor in religion, there is no reason to deny that God may manifest his presence through the exceptional experiences of individuals, as well as through those universal processes of nature in which all alike share.[1]

The Argument from Experience

Our most serious difficulty remains—the difficulty which is due to the presence of evil in the world. What shall we do with all the facts in our own lives and in the lives of others which lead us to question whether the power who is responsible for the world is in fact good?

There is only one way in which we can deal with them, and that is through some experience which gives us the personal assurance we need. In this world of sorrow and sin, we must find God at work, manifesting his presence in spite of its tragedy and heartbreak; more than this, using these in his inscrutable wisdom to bring to birth permanent and satisfying good.

The story of the Gospels meets us at our point of greatest need; for it makes us acquainted with a man who has had this experience, in whom this transvaluation of values has taken place. Jesus Christ faced evil in its most baffling and doubt-provoking form: physical suffering, moral isolation, mental anxiety, religious doubt, and, hardest of all to bear, the experience of failure in that on which he had set his heart. His people rejected him; his church excommunicated him. Of his disciples, one betrayed him,

[1] *Cf.* pp. 79–81.

one denied him, all misunderstood and at the last forsook him. Yet out of this experience he emerged triumphant to take his place as the supreme religious leader of mankind, and the cross which, to his contemporaries, had been a stumbling-block and foolishness has become, to the generations which followed them, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

And the wonderful thing about the experience of Jesus is that it does not stand alone. It has been repeated on a lesser scale in the lives of his followers. What happened to him has happened to them, and is still happening. Many a humble man and woman, facing a sorrow that would have broken any heart not divinely sustained, is adding a new chapter to the continuing record.

This deepening and purifying of character through suffering is, to be sure, not confined to Christians. It has come to men and women of many lands and of many creeds. It has come to women in the agony of childbirth; to men in the loneliness of prison and in the pains of martyrdom; but to Jesus and those who followed him it had a hidden meaning. To them it was God's answer to the prayer of faith, his way of assuring his children that, in spite of all apparent evil and defeat, he is master of his world and will do for those who put their trust in him more and better than they can ask or think.

This assurance of God's presence in suffering and failure is open to every one of his children to-day. What others have experienced of his love and power, we, too, may experience if we seek him in the right way. He is speaking to us if we have ears to hear; he is doing for us if we have eyes to see; he is not only around us, fashioner of the environment in which we live, he is within us, the source of all good impulses and all holy desires; he is at once the ideal after which we aspire and the inspiration that leads us to

pursue it. Through him alone we come to our best selves, and the final proof that he is indeed the personal friend and father we need is the inward happiness which the discovery of his presence brings into our lives.

2. How Happiness Comes and Why It Stays

The Lack of Happiness in Contemporary Religion

At no point is the contrast between the religion of Jesus and that of many of our contemporaries more marked than in their attitude toward happiness. Religion means many things to present-day Christians: opportunity, responsibility, duty, discipline, salvation, service. But how few people there are who think of their religion primarily as a bringer of happiness. Yet this is what religion brought to Jesus and this is what it has brought to the greatest of those who have followed him in the past. "Blessed" is a word that recurs again and again in Jesus' teaching, and "blessed" is only an old-fashioned way of saying "happy." The Sermon on the Mount began with a catalogue of happy people and what made them happy. Almost the last words which Jesus said to his disciples were a promise that he would leave them his joy.[1] Those who have known him best, as we have seen, have had that promise fulfilled. The saints have been the happy people.

How comes it, then, that for so many people in our day the connection between religion and happiness has been severed? To answer this question, we must recall the ways in which happiness comes to us.

How Happiness Comes and Why It Stays

One of the commonest sources of happiness is activity—the tension of a muscle, the coursing of the

[1] John 16: 20–22.

blood through the veins, the thinking of an interesting thought. Whatever I do and do well, whether the thing be physical or intellectual—a brisk walk taken over the hills in the early morning, or the solution of a complicated mathematical problem—gives me a feeling of well-being that makes me happy.

Happiness of this kind is a purely individual affair. Robinson Crusoe might have had it on his island before Friday came. But there is another kind of happiness which is unattainable without the presence of other persons. There is a satisfaction that comes to us only through our sympathies. When we have wished to do a service to some one else and have succeeded, we take pleasure in the fact that the other person is the better for it. An unselfish joy comes to us through another's welfare and gives human love a peculiar and inimitable charm.

There is a rarer and more lasting happiness still, one in which human relationships play no part. It is the happiness that comes from the contemplation of that which is inherently worthy—our satisfaction in truth, our reverence for goodness, our delight in beauty. Such happiness, so far as we can see, is the peculiar prerogative of man. In it his kinship to the divine most clearly appears. Man is Godlike in this most of all: that he has the power to appreciate that which is inherently admirable and to find his happiness therein.

By whatever path it comes, happiness takes us unawares. The condition of enduring happiness, as contrasted with transient satisfaction, is always that we should forget ourselves in what we are doing or saying or admiring. One can make one's business a pleasure. To make one's pleasure a business is, in the long run, fatal.

A recent play describes the experience of a man who died and had gone, as he had supposed, to

heaven. When he recovered consciousness, he found himself in a place where everything he wanted was to be had for the asking—good things to eat, good clothes to wear, beautiful objects to look at. Whatever whim entered his head was no sooner expressed than it was gratified. The experience, at first extraordinarily pleasant, soon became monotonous and he longed for the variety of a refusal. Seeking out the person who seemed to be in charge, he said to him reproachfully:

"This heaven of yours isn't what it's cracked up to be."

"Heaven," said the other; "surely you have made a mistake; this isn't heaven; it's hell."

Paradoxical as it may seem, happiness comes to us quite as often by giving up what we want at the moment as by getting it. As the feeling of well-being that results when we are perfectly adjusted to our environment and every part of us is functioning normally, happiness is not a thing that any man can have by himself, not at least for any length of time. It comes to us only as we enter into right relations with other persons, human or divine. We are happy when we love, when we are interested, when we aspire, when we worship; in a word, when we forget ourselves altogether in something greater and worthier than ourselves.

Why So Many Religious People Are Not Happy

We can understand now why so many people fail to find happiness in their religion. They are looking at it too exclusively from their own point of view, too little from that of others. They think of religion as a kind of insurance agency, by which they can escape punishment and win salvation; or they think of it as a great task laid on them by God, the success or failure of which depends on their fidelity. Both

these conceptions are true as far as they go. Religion does bring deliverance to those who are in danger and forgiveness to those who have sinned; religion does offer opportunities of service and lay heavy responsibilities on those who accept its challenge. But neither view alone exhausts what religion may mean to us and neither alone can bring the happiness which Jesus promises to his disciples. Both put self in the foreground and so violate the fundamental condition on which true happiness depends, which is forgetfulness of self.

It is an unworthy conception of religion which makes it all taking and no giving. All-important as it is to have one's sins forgiven, forgiveness is but the beginning of religion; not its end. To be saved, as Jesus understood it, was not simply to be delivered from evil; it was to be set free for good. It was to enter upon a life of active service. It was to become a fellow worker with God in the making of a new world.

But many a Christian has lost touch altogether with this side of the religious experience. His religion is always saying "no" to him instead of saying "yes." Instead of setting its possessor free to enjoy whatever life may bring, it shuts him up in a narrow enclosure and cuts him off from sympathy with the common life of man. His religion is like a valuable jewel which he keeps locked up in a safe for fear that it may be stolen. The man who proposes any change, however innocent, seems to him a thief who is trying to take away from him what he has. He is afraid of the higher critics; he is afraid of the Modernists; he is afraid of any departure from accepted ways and standards.

Since happiness requires the proper functioning of every power, it is no wonder that such introspective, self-centred religion brings little happiness. Fear and happiness cannot be house-fellows; one or the

other must leave. Where fear stays, happiness is shown the door.

But selfish concern for one's own religious welfare is not the only cause of unhappiness in religion. If it is demoralizing to receive and not to give, it is no less mistaken to think that one can give and not receive. In our own day, many Christians fail to find happiness in their religion because they overemphasize its duties and responsibilities. They are busy from morning till night, planning, organizing, preaching, teaching, begging, giving, laying hands on every one whom they can influence, and setting them to work. They build churches, organize societies, enlist recruits, win converts, put humanity forward on the path of reform. In so far as they are living useful and earnest lives, they have the happiness that comes with all normal activity. In so far as they succeed in helping the people for whom they work, they have the higher happiness that unselfish service brings. But practical activity alone does not suffice for happiness. Often the help we wish to give is refused. Often the result we desire to achieve is unaccomplished. Compared with the ideal, our best progress is pitiful indeed. The more we make earnest with doing, the harder it is to be content with what is done; the more happiness will elude us. Unless there is something here and now in which we can take inherent satisfaction, we may as well renounce all hope of lasting happiness.

In a suggestive essay on *The Religion of Time and of Eternity*,[1] Philip Wicksteed has interpreted to his fellow Christians of the West the genius of mediæval religion. Mediæval religion, he reminds us, made contemplation central. Our religion, as we have seen, is primarily a religion of action. For one believer who

[1] Carpenter, J. E., and Wicksteed, P. H., *Studies in Theology* (London, 1903), pp. 4–50.

says "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," there are thousands who pray "Hear, Lord, for thy servant speaketh." Unless our religion makes us dissatisfied with things as they are and sets us to work for something different, we feel that something is wrong. When we study the lives of the old saints, Saint Francis or Saint Theresa, we are impressed by the fact that their chief desire is to be left alone to enjoy something that they have found. With us, emphasis falls on the quest; with them, on the goal. Ours is the religion of the seeker; theirs, the religion of those who possess the object of their search. To be still and let God do for us what he will, that is to worship as Saint Francis and Saint Theresa understood worship. In worship, one is content to realize the fact of God and to give oneself up to the happiness which the realization brings.

Faith in God may still bring this enduring satisfaction to those who put their trust in him. In God we find complete that which in us is imperfect. In him we see the goal toward which our feet are climbing. And because of what we see, we win confidence that our struggle and our aspiration will not be in vain. Through faith in God, we pass from hope to conviction, from desire to attainment; and conviction and attainment bring happiness.

3. What Jesus Helps Us to See in God

What Jesus Takes Over from the Thought of the Past

What, then, do we see in God as we contemplate him from the vantage-ground which Jesus has given us? Much that others before us have seen, but much, too, that is new and distinctive; insights that we could never have won but for Jesus; insights that even now it would be hard for us to keep were the

steadying and enlightening influence of his presence to be removed.

It will help us to appreciate what our thought of God owes to Jesus if we remind ourselves for a moment of what others had thought of God before him. In the course of human history three great convictions concerning God recur again and again. Christianity takes over these convictions but places them in a new and different setting. In the first place, men have thought of God as the creator of the universe, the ultimate reality on which all things depend. Again, they have thought of God as indwelling spirit, the source of insight and of progress in individuals and in society. Finally, they have thought of him as ideal personality, wise, holy, and loving, revealing his character and purpose to those who put their trust in him.

God as Ultimate Reality

The word "God" has meant many things to many people, but it has always meant the ultimate source of wisdom and of help. There was a time when each section of life with which the worshipper was concerned was believed to have its own God. This was true of the nation. The Egyptians had their God and the Canaanites theirs and the Moabites theirs. The God of Israel was Jehovah. It was equally true within the nation. The Greeks had not one but many gods. Ares was the God of War, Athena the Goddess of Wisdom, Eros the God of Love. Of Socrates, men said: "He is an atheist; he believes in only one god." But as the unity of life became more apparent and the many worlds were seen to be parts of one all-embracing world, it became increasingly difficult to believe in many gods. Riper experience revealed a new and larger world in which all nature was perceived to be subject to one unchanging law, all history to

be the unfolding of a single purpose. With the discovery of the universe, belief in one God became inevitable.

All the changes in men's philosophy have been reflected in their view of God's nature and of his activity. Sometimes God has been conceived as the infinite and eternal, in contrast to nature which is finite and changing; and again men have recognized in him the Creative Spirit who is fashioning all things in conformity with his divine will. Sometimes they have thought of God as transcendent, working upon his universe from without; at other times as immanent, working through his universe from within; now as active at particular times and in special places; and again as ceaselessly at work.

To-day we most easily think of God's creative activity as continuous, a process of evolution in which each new thing is formed out of some fresh combination of materials contributed by the past. Whether this is a complete account of what happens, we shall probably never know; for the older elements undergo so extraordinary a remaking in the process of being taken over that to our consciousness they become something wholly new. No one who had never seen hydrogen and oxygen combined in the proportion of two to one could possibly have predicted water. No one who knew only Nancy Hanks and the rough backwoodsman who was her husband could possibly have predicted Lincoln. In this recurrent experience of the novel, the unpredictable, we have the psychological basis of the persistent belief in new creation, a belief that seems likely to last as long as the experience to which it owes its origin continues. Modernists and Fundamentalists have different explanations of how God brings new things to pass. But both agree that God is the Creator.

God as Immanent Spirit

So far we have been thinking of God from without as we contemplate him with the mind. But it is possible to think of God not only as outside of us but within us, the life of our life, the energy of our activity, the source of progress both of the individual and of society. This indwelling God has made his presence felt in many ages and in many religions. He was the divine Word to whom the philosophers of Greece owed their insight. Christians know him as the Holy Spirit—the Comforter through whom we experience assurance and from whom we receive inspiration.[1]

We all know the difference between mere opinion and the settled beliefs we call convictions. But it is not so easy to tell how we pass from one to the other. Why is it that we believe what we believe? It is because of something in us that says "Yes, it must be so; it cannot be other." But whence comes this voice that carries conviction? Moralists call it conscience; philosophers call it intuition; religious people call it the Spirit of God. Ask a religious man why he is so sure that the world has a meaning and life is worth while and he will tell you that it is because God who made the world is at the same time interpreting the world to him. When he speaks of the witness of the Spirit, he means that the insights which bring order into his thinking and lend confidence to his moral judgments come, he believes, from God.

The counterpart of assurance in the field of action is inspiration. Why do I do this rather than that? In minor matters I am often at a loss for an answer. I follow the line of least resistance, turning to the right or to the left as chance may dictate. But in more important matters, the decision seems to come from

[1] John 14:16.

within rather than from without. I act as I do because I cannot help myself. There is something within me that impels me beyond myself to some end not as yet attained. This inner drawing, which is the spring of all progress, is interpreted by religious men as the Spirit of God acting upon the spirit of man, his child. They become aware of

> "Those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things
> . . . . .
> Blank misgivings of a creature
> Moving about in worlds not realized.
> High instincts before which our mortal nature
> Doth tremble, as a guilty thing surprised." [1]

This experience of inward drawing is common to earnest men of all countries and of all ages. Every generation has had its mystics, men and women whose ears have been attuned to the whisper of the inner voice. What that voice has said they have seldom been able to repeat. Yet from time to time leaders have appeared who have translated this incommunicable experience into definite, realizable, and dependable ideals. Such a leader, above all, was Jesus Christ.

God as Ideal Personality

This suggests to us a third point in men's thought about God, in some respects the most important of all. They have thought of God as the moral ideal, the supreme expression of perfection, the realization of all that is most adorable and satisfying. As to what that ideal is like, they have not agreed. Sometimes they have contrasted God with all that is human as a being so remote and inaccessible that no further definition of his nature is possible; and, again, they have thought of him as ideal personality,

[1] Wordsworth, *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality.*

wise, holy, and loving, the one who realizes with a completeness which passes our finite ability to comprehend, or even to imagine, all that we would wish ourselves to be.

This conception of God as the ideal personality finds its clearest expression in the religion of Israel. The great prophets of the eighth and following centuries presented a conception of the character of Jehovah which has never been surpassed. In contrast to the religion of their day which laid chief stress on religious ceremonial, Amos and Isaiah insisted that what Jehovah desired was justice and mercy. Yet uncompromising as were God's demands for a clean heart and a right spirit, there was no sin so heinous but he was ready to meet it with full forgiveness if only there was a penitent spirit. "Though your sins be as scarlet," cries Isaiah, "they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."[1] Hosea compares the love of Jehovah for Israel to that of a husband for an unfaithful wife;[2] the Psalmist to that of a father for his weak and needy children.[3] Even mother love is not great enough to measure the love of Jehovah for his people. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee."[4]

What Jesus Contributes to Our Thought of God

It is against this background of the earlier experience of the race that we must put the contribution of Jesus. With the sure intuition of genius, Jesus conserves for us that which is essential in the legacy of the past. His "Father in Heaven" was not a new God but one who in every age had been reveal-

[1] Isaiah 1:18.
[2] Hosea 3:1. *Cf.* 2:2–23.
[3] Psalm 103:13.
[4] Isaiah 49:15.

ing himself to his children. Jesus thankfully recognized his predecessors in prophet and psalmist. He reaffirmed what they had learned of God's power, of his wisdom, of his righteousness, and of his love. "I came not to destroy," he said, "but to fulfil."[1] And this was supremely true of his attitude toward God.

But while Jesus took over much from the past, he gave it a new setting and a new emphasis. The prophets, as Harnack reminds us, said many things that Jesus said; but they also said much that he did not say.[2] The things which Jesus left out are as worthy of our attention as the things which he affirmed. He subordinated the ceremonial elements in religion to the moral. He gave central place to the divine forgiveness. He refused to base his claim to be Messiah upon the signs which his contemporaries would have regarded as authentic proofs of a divine commission.[3] No one before Jesus had ever spoken of God in such simple and convincing terms. When he spoke he made God seem real and near.

But the life he lived with God was more important than anything which he said about God. Others had used almost the same words, but their lives did not match them. In Jesus, life and words were one. He was himself God's living Word, enlightening and convincing, a mirror which disclosed to men the face of God.

Jesus himself says little of this highest and most unique service. The attitude of humility and gratitude which befits a son in his intercourse with his father he maintained to the end. It was reserved for his disciples to discover the deeper unity of life which

[1] Matt. 5:17.

[2] *What Is Christianity?* Eng. tr. by Saunders (New York, 1901), p. 51.

[3] Mark 8:12. *Cf.* Matt. 16:4, Luke 11:29. The context shows that the sign to which Jesus refers is his preaching.

made him to them more than man, even the Word of God made flesh. We cannot understand all that Jesus means for our thought of God till we take this later discovery into the account. Jesus, using the words the prophets had used before him, speaks to us of God's wisdom, of his holiness, and of his love. But what it means to be wise, holy, and loving, he teaches chiefly by what he does and is. In Jesus we see the answer to our question "What is God like?"

This intimate association of Jesus with God gives the Christian idea of God its distinctive character. The qualities that Jesus illustrated in his human life, we carry back to God himself. As Jesus was uncompromising in his loyalty to the right, so we are convinced is God; as Jesus was loving, so we dare to affirm is God. To think otherwise would be to make the creator less than the creature. This forthgoing, Christlike God, everywhere present in nature, in history, in the lives of men, known to the mystics and saints of every age as the living Christ, is the true object of Christian faith.

This emphasis on the unique contribution of Jesus to our thought of God must not lead us to underestimate the importance of God's earlier revelations. God did not wait till Jesus came to begin his revealing and redeeming work. In every age he has been present with his human children, teaching them the lessons they were fitted to learn, preparing them for the fuller revelation to come. Every age has had its prophet of righteousness; every religion has borne some witness to God; but only Christianity can picture to us what God is like; only Christianity can translate the abstract terms which define God's character into the concrete features of a human life. Christianity is more than the religion of incarnation; it is the religion of the God who became incarnate in Jesus.

To sum up, God, as Jesus helps us to see him, is the personal Spirit, at once holy and loving, who in infinite wisdom is preparing the universe he is making to be the home of his creatures and who, through his Spirit indwelling in man, is transforming men and women into the likeness of Jesus Christ and uniting them with himself in the work and worship of the Christlike society.

4. The God of Religion and the God of Theology

The Trinity as the Theologian's Way of Describing God

These, then, are the permanent elements in the Christian conception of God: creative energy, indwelling Spirit, ideal personality, each interpreted and illustrated by the life, the teaching, and the character of Jesus Christ.

Theologians and philosophers have defined these elements in phrases which have become meaningless for many. They have invented technical terms to describe various aspects of God's nature—terms like "transcendent" and "immanent," "infinite" and "eternal," "person" and "substance." These terms have their meaning for the specialist, but when taken out of their context and used to describe what God means for the personal life of his worshipper, they may be as misleading as the physicist's definition of the constituents of the atom would be to a man who wishes to describe the country over which he is walking or the sunshine which warms him.

We may illustrate this confusion in the case of a single doctrine, a doctrine which has been a source of perplexity to many an earnest spirit, all the more because it has found its way out of the treatises of the theologians into our hymns and our prayers.

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," begins

Bishop Heber's familiar hymn, and ends, "God in three persons, Blessed Trinity."

The Trinity is the theologian's way of defining the God whom Jesus Christ reveals. It is the attempt to sum up in a single phrase the different aspects of the Christian thought of God which we have thus far been considering separately. It is the affirmation that, however God may manifest himself to us in experience, as creator, fashioning the world in which we live, as redeemer, sharing our sorrows and forgiving our sins, or as indwelling Spirit, bringing to birth within us the outgoing and self-forgetting life, he is always one and the same God. It is a truth that lies at the very heart of our Christian faith, but the words in which it is described and the associations which are gathered about them are so confusing that for many they have become hindrances rather than helps.

As formulated in theology, the Trinity is the doctrine that there are in God three distinctions (known technically as persons, not personalities)—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each has it own function. God the Father is revealed in creation as the maker of all things visible and invisible; God the Son is revealed in redemption as the Saviour of mankind; God the Spirit is revealed in regeneration as the source of both prophetic insight and Christian character. Yet all three are one and the same God.

A long history lies back of this formulation. With the recovery of faith that came to them with the resurrection, the disciples felt the need of some rational explanation of the place which Jesus had come to hold in their thinking about God. Like the Jews, they believed in God as transcendent personality, creator of the universe and ruler of men and nations. With the Greeks, they recognized his presence in

themselves as immanent Spirit, the source of assurance and aspiration; but they had known Jesus, and because they had known him they believed that the transcendent God who had revealed himself in history through prophet and psalmist had manifested himself supremely in their Master, his chosen Messiah, and that the Spirit which had lent the philosophers of Greece their wisdom had dwelt in this new teacher, who was the Word of God incarnate. Only after centuries of debate and many experiments did the Christian church reach a formulation which combined the old insight and the new, and this formulation was the doctrine of the Trinity.

Different Ways of Conceiving of the Trinity

Like the doctrines of the incarnation and the deity of Christ, the doctrine of the Trinity has been variously interpreted. It has been thought of as a mystery transcending reason, only to be apprehended through the mystical experience of worship. It has been understood as the attempt, by the use of human analogies taken from the life of the individual or of society, to conceive of the life of God in himself apart from all human experience. It has been interpreted (and this for many who are not philosophers or theologians will seem the easiest and the most satisfactory explanation) as the summary of our experience of God as revealed, the doctrine that gathers up the different phases of our thought of God which we have thus far considered separately and affirms that they are all parts of the revelation of the one undivided God.

Some years ago, when travelling by steamer from Beirût to Constantinople, I chanced to overhear a discussion between two fellow travellers on the doctrine of the Trinity. One of them, a Roman Catholic, was trying to convince the other, a Mohammedan,

that the Trinity is a reasonable doctrine. He rehearsed the technical arguments which theological students are taught in the seminary, explaining the meaning of the terms "substance" and "person," and the sense in which God is at once three and one. The Mohammedan, a Turkish Bey from Constantinople, heard him courteously, and at intervals in the discussion he would bow and say: "All that you say may be very true, but we Mohammedans believe that if God intended to reveal himself to man, he would do it in simple ways such as a child could understand."

So the two separated, unconvinced.

That same evening I chanced to find myself alone with the Mohammedan, and the conversation was renewed, but this time along somewhat different lines. It was suggested that the truth for which the doctrine of the Trinity stands was not a recondite mystery concerning the nature of God in himself but the summary of certain facts of which we have first-hand evidence in experience; namely, the fact that the Supreme Being whom Mohammedans and Christians alike recognize as creator has given us, in the person of Jesus, whom Mohammedans as well as Christians revere, our clearest revelation of what he is like; and the further fact that this same God, by his Spirit, imparts to our human spirits intimations regarding the ideal which he wishes us to realize and gives us strength for the life which he wishes us to lead. When we parted, after interchange of thought along these lines, it was with the mutual recognition that, great as were our differences, there was a common ground of religious experience on which we both could meet.

What is true of the doctrine of the Trinity is true of the other doctrines in which God has been defined. However abstract and confusing their form

may be, they point us back at last to realities which evidence their presence in experience. We shall find our way most surely and most quickly to the meaning of any doctrine if, having ourselves experienced the reality to which it bears witness, we express the conviction to which we have been led in the terms that are most natural to us.

But there is a caution that needs to be added. The way of experience is long and arduous. Many delays and disappointments may await us before we win to the goal. In the meantime, let us be thankful for the record that our predecessors have left us of their discoveries, even if the language in which they describe them presents difficulties to our thought. Above all, let us beware of making our own limited experience the measure of the insights which have come to others who have approached closer to the divine reality than we.

5. The Practice of the Presence of God as the Christian Way to Happiness

The Practice of the Presence of God

This survey of what Jesus has taught us to see in God will help us to understand how God meets our need of happiness. He does it by realizing for us the conditions on which all lasting happiness depends. We have seen that happiness comes to us as a by-product of every normal and healthful activity; through our friendships and our affections; and through the contemplation of objects that are inherently worthy. God meets us at each one of these points with an unfailing supply. He opens to us a field of activity which affords scope for all our powers. He introduces us into the fellowship of those who are living the life of love. Above all, he is himself

the thing we most value and admire. In God we see our ideal realized, and we dare to believe that it will some day be realized in ourselves and in our world.

This does not mean that there is nothing for us to do; that we are to be merely recipients and not active agents. Even on the lower plane of our human relationships, as we have seen, happiness does not come of itself. There are conditions to be fulfilled, a discipline to be undergone. Happiness in one of its most distinctive and satisfying forms is the outcome of right social relationships, and to have it we must pay the price. Stevenson had this in mind in his familiar lines:

> "If I have faltered more or less
> In my great task of happiness. . . ."[1]

The happiness he tells us it is our duty to cultivate is not our own subjective feeling of satisfaction or contentment, pleasant as these may be, but "the bright morning face" we turn to others. Happiness, in other words, even on its human side, if it is to be lasting and worthy, must be a gift I bring to others as well as a satisfaction I enjoy by myself.

This is even more true of that higher happiness which comes to us through the vision of God. Here, too, there is a preparation to be made, a discipline to be undergone. There is a *practice* of the presence of God which begins with surrender and which ends with worship.

I have written elsewhere of what that practice involves and I need not repeat what was there said.[2] Here let me only say once more that on its divine side, as on its human, there is a sense in which happiness is not only a gift but a task. "Man's chief end," says an old catechism wisely, "is to glorify

[1] Stevenson, R. L., *The Celestial Surgeon.*
[2] *The Life of Prayer in a World of Science* (New York, 1927).

God and to enjoy him forever,"[1] and the path to enjoyment leads through surrender.

There are times when life presses so hard that joy seems unattainable. All that we touch here is partial and incomplete. Christlikeness, the goal for each of us, is still unattained. The Kingdom of God, the consummation for society, is hope rather than fulfilment. Wherever we turn we find only beginnings. Our best is but prophecy of a better still to be.

But the spirit of man refuses to be satisfied with fragments and segments of reality. We long for completeness, for perfection. God has set eternity in our heart, and our heart is restless till it finds its rest in him. In him alone, as we have seen, we find complete that which in us is still imperfect. In him alone we see the goal toward which our feet are climbing. In him, therefore, and in him alone, we find enduring happiness.

How God Satisfies Our Need of Happiness

"Blessed are the pure in heart," said Jesus, "for they shall see God."[2] The vision of God is coming to many a man and woman in our day and from time to time some are able to tell us, each in his own language, what the vision has meant. In the words of one whose lifelong devotion to science has taught him to

[1] *Westminster Shorter Catechism,* Question 1. Roman Catholics agree with Protestants at this point. *Cf. The Interior Life,* ed. Tissot, Eng. tr. by Mitchell, W. H. (London, 1913), p. 13: "In creating me for himself, God manifests to me the essential love which he has for himself. God is love (I John 4:8), and he has created everything by love: by love for himself before all, and thus it is that he has made all for his glory. But his work of creation was also for the love of me, and thus it is that he has made all things for my happiness. . . . God intends me to find, even in this world, a host of satisfactions in my life's progress towards him, in my acquisition of the being which constitutes my temporal existence; and finally, in eternity, the one, infinite, ultimate, complete repose of my whole being, which is called salvation. Happiness in this world, happiness in the next, this, too, is my end."

[2] Matt. 5:8.

weigh his words, "The depths of [God's] existence lie beyond all vulgarities of praise or of power. He gives to suffering its swift insight into values which can issue from it. He is the ideal companion who transmutes what has been lost into a living fact within his own nature. He is the mirror which discloses to every creature its own greatness."[1]

"He gives to suffering," says Professor Whitehead, "its swift insight into values which can issue from it." We think of the sad procession that climbed the hill called "Calvary" and the sight that drew them thither, and in the light of this new insight it is transfigured with divine meaning. The cross, which seems the mockery of justice and the death of hope, becomes to us "wisdom and power," since it is there that God shares man's suffering for love's sake.

"He is the ideal companion who transmutes what had been lost into a living fact within his own nature." Whatever in us is broken and incomplete in this life—the hidden longings, the unrealized aspirations, the prayer that never comes to speech—in him finds its fulfilment; and if this life be too short and our thoughts turn to the future, we find him still there. The immortality to which he invites us is not mere continuance of existence; it is communion with our Father who is in heaven.

"He is the mirror which discloses to every creature its own greatness." He and he alone makes possible for us the creative experience. He is the source of that joy of which Bergson has written so eloquently,[2] the joy which, in distinction from pleasure (nature's device for prolonging life), is the signal of the triumph of life; the joy of the mother with her child, of the artist with his masterpiece, of the

[1] Whitehead, A. N., *Religion in the Making* (New York, 1926), pp. 154, 155.

[2] "Life and Consciousness," *Hibbert Journal*, vol. X, pp. 24–44.

scientist with his discovery. "If, then, in every province the triumph of life is expressed by creation, ought we not to think that the ultimate reason of human life is a creation which, in distinction from that of the artist or the man of science, can be pursued at every moment and by all men alike? I mean the creation of self by self, the continual enrichment of personality by an element which it does not draw from outside but causes to spring forth from itself."[1] This highest happiness God, who is at once the inspiration of our creative activity and its goal, alone makes possible.

Of all the aspects of our modern life, none is more repellent than its sordidness. Utility has brought us all under its spell. Whatever stands in the way of efficiency must go, however much patience and loving care have gone into the making of it. But there is something in us that cries out against this vandalism, something that loves the individual and the distinctive and wishes to preserve it. In face of the gigantic forces of the modern world, what power can preserve for us the beauty we still possess and help us to bring beauty into corners of life which are now ugly and repellent?

Jesus gives us our answer in his revelation of God. In God we recognize the supreme artist who, using imperfect men and women like ourselves as his instruments, is shaping out of our world of sin and sorrow a new and better world fitted to our heart's desires.

"And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness;
'Round our restlessness his rest."[2]

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 42, 43.
[2] Mrs. Browning, *Rhyme of the Duchess May.*

PART IV. THE SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

CHAPTER VII

The Christian Comradeship: or What to Believe About the Church

1. The Church That Unites and the Church That Divides.

   Differing Attitudes Toward the Church—The Church as Divisive and as Unifying.

2. The Church as the Christian Comradeship.

   The Church as Society and as Institution—Ways of Meeting the Need of Comradeship—The Church as the Christian Comradeship.

3. The Church as the Organ of Christ's Spirit in the World.

   The Church as the Body of Christ—Why Men Criticise the Church.

4. The Problem of Institutional Christianity.

   How Institutions Arise—The Problem of Institutional Christianity—Different Views of the Organized Church—Is an Inclusive Church Possible?

5. The Living Church as Interpreter of the New Meanings in the Old Gospel.

   The Creed as Help and as Hindrance—What to Do with the Creeds We Have—The Living Church as Interpreter.

Christians differ widely in their attitude toward the church. To some the church is the most divine of institutions; to others the most serious obstacle to spiritual religion.

This difference is in part due to the limitations which are inherent in all institutional life. No organization perfectly expresses the ideal of those who live under it. The servant tends to become the master, and forms which are the natural expression of the life of one age live on into the next and become hindrances instead of helps. This tendency, inherent in every kind of institution, is present in the church.

To appreciate the true significance of the church, we must understand the need it is designed to meet. This is that of a comradeship at once human and divine. As a human society, the church enlarges our sympathy and reinforces our power by uniting us with those who have followed Jesus before us, or who will follow him after us. As a divine creation, it transmits God's revelation in Jesus from generation to generation, makes vivid the consciousness of God's presence by common worship, and interprets to individuals and to nations his purpose for mankind.

1. The Church That Unites and the Church That Divides

Differing Attitudes Toward the Church

Wherever we have touched Jesus' gospel we have been impressed by its social emphasis. Jesus began his ministry by announcing that the Kingdom of God was at hand. He ended it by giving his life that others might be saved. He called his first disciples to be fishers of men, and when his own work came, as it seemed, to a premature end on Calvary he commissioned his followers to carry on the work he had begun. The inevitable outcome of such a commission was the church. Through the church the influence of Jesus is perpetuated, his disciples united in worship and service, and his gospel made known to each succeeding generation.

Yet there is scarcely any subject on which his followers are so divided. Ask the first dozen Christians you meet what they think of the church and you will be impressed by the divergencies which will be revealed. Is the church central in Christianity or is it peripheral? Is it indispensable to a healthful religious life and, therefore, something that deserves our whole-hearted allegiance? Or is it legitimate but relatively unimportant—something we may use, indeed, if we care to but can neglect without much harm? Or is the church, as some would have us believe, a positive injury to the religious life—something we would be better off without? All these views you will find held by people who call themselves Christians.

These differences are not mere academic questions, of interest to philosophers or theologians. They bear

directly upon our conduct. They not only hamper us in our work for others; they limit our fellowship with one another in the most sacred and intimate acts of our religion. For every reason, therefore, it is important that we should come to clear conviction as to what we mean by the church and what it was meant to do for us.

The Church as Divisive and as Unifying

Had we been sitting in the gallery of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington on a spring morning in 1893, we might have looked down on a great company of black-coated men who packed the building to the doors. On the platform to which all faces are turned stands a man of some fifty years who is reading from a manuscript. Now and then he looks up to interject some remark not in the text and then resumes the thread of his argument. He has a bright eye, a short gray beard, and an air of forcefulness and determination that mark him as a man of character. The men on the floor are Commissioners of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The man on the platform is Doctor Charles Augustus Briggs, and the case the famous trial in which he was convicted of heresy and the issue first clearly joined in that long debate between liberal and conservative, which is continued to-day in the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy.[1]

Doctor Briggs was my teacher. I knew him intimately. He was a sincere and devout Christian, a great scholar, a loyal churchman, one who had helped

[1] The charges against Doctor Briggs were: (a) that he made the Bible, the church, and the reason co-ordinate fountains of divine authority; (b) that he denied that Moses wrote the whole of the five books attributed to him in our Bible, or Isaiah the whole of the book which bears his name, and (c) that he taught that there is progressive sanctification after death.

many who were in doubt to keep their faith in God and their belief that the Bible was his revelation. Imagine the shock to young men just entering the ministry when they saw such a man put out of the church because his conscience would not let him deny what his reason taught him was true.

A generation passes away and in the Cathedral of Upsala, in Sweden, a great congregation is gathered from many different churches and nations. Thirty-seven countries are represented in the assembly and more than one hundred different independent communions. The gorgeous robes of the dignitaries of the Eastern Orthodox Church contrast with the sober black of Scotch Presbyterians and German Lutherans. At the altar a man is standing upon whom all eyes are fixed. He is very old—eighty years at least and a long white beard flows on his breast. He is speaking in Greek, a language which few of his hearers understand, yet all are gazing at him with unwavering attention. He is the patriarch Photius of Alexandria and he is reciting the Nicene Creed. Men may well follow with rapt attention what is going on. The form of the Nicene Creed has been the subject of contention between the churches of the East and the West for more than a thousand years. The point of difference is highly technical, turning on the inclusion or omission of a single word.[1] Yet the addition of this word was one of the causes which led to the age-long schism between Constantinople and Rome. At Upsala, Christians of the East and the West found that this barrier need no longer separate them. The open chasm which had separated Christians for a millennium was for the moment bridged.

[1] The churches of the East and the West differ in their formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. The Eastern Orthodox Church teaches that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father only. The Roman Catholic Church adds the word *filioque* (and from the Son). The Protestant churches of the West have adopted the Roman version of the creed.

The service in the Cathedral of Upsala marked the culmination of the great conference held by the churches at Stockholm in the interests of Christian unity. Those who there knelt together in the presence of a common Father to pray for reconciliation and peace in a world at strife received an inner assurance that, despite all outward differences, the church was indeed one.

These two scenes suggest a contrast that is never far from our thoughts, the contrast between the ideal church which will express the unity of all Christians and, I will not say the real church, but the church as it appears in the world to-day, which often seems to exist for the purpose of perpetuating their differences.

Which of these churches is the true church, or are they both parts of the same church, and, if so, what is the relation of the one to the other?

2. The Church as the Christian Comradeship

The Church as Society and as Institution

Clear thinking about the church requires us to distinguish two senses in which the word "church" is used. In one sense, the church is a society of persons who share certain religious ideals and experiences. In another sense, the church is an organization through which these ideals and experiences find corporate expression. The Apostle Paul uses the word in the first sense when he compares the church to the body of Christ. When we speak of the Episcopal Church or the Presbyterian Church, we use the word in the second sense.[1]

[1] This difference was recognized in the older Protestant theology by the distinction between the church "visible" and the church "invisible." The Westminster Confession of Faith defines the former as the company of those that "profess the true religion together with their children"; the latter as "the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be, gathered into one under Christ the head thereof" (chap. XXV, 1, 2).

Yet many people—perhaps most people—fail to make the distinction. When they speak of the church, they mean the church as we know it to-day, a composite body, in part spiritual, in part external, a company of religious people organized under definite laws and functioning in definite ways. It never occurs to them that one can think of the church in any other way.

To understand the church, therefore, we must begin with its inward or spiritual side. When we have discovered the need which brings Christian people together, we shall not find it hard to understand why their association should take the outward form it does. That need is the need of comradeship, one of the oldest and most persistent that is known to man.

Ways of Meeting the Need of Comradeship

Men have found comradeship in many different ways: in the family, in the tribe, in the state, in their business or profession, in their social class, in their race. There is no form of social relationship through which man's need of fellowship has not at some time found expression; which has not brought its members sympathy or reinforcement, as the case may be.

Useful as they are, these more familiar forms of comradeship sooner or later prove limiting. They meet our need at one point, but they disappoint us at another. For one thing, they are too exacting. They ask of us often more than we are prepared to give. Each has its fixed conventions which often seem to limit freedom rather than to promote it, to repress personality rather than to develop it. In its more conventional forms of organization—the family, the profession, the social class—society has scant toleration for the rebel against accepted customs.

So the hunger for comradeship takes a new form. We long for some society in which all these limita-

tions shall be overcome; a society both inclusive and adaptable, in which all legitimate human interests will find a place and all true men and women will feel at home.

The more religion means to us, the more we shall feel this longing. Religion, as we have seen, is an interest of the whole man. It unifies the divided personality. It is the means by which, as individuals, we find freedom and peace. Inevitably, therefore, we find ourselves asking whether it may not perform a like function in society. The more vividly we realize what Jesus' gospel has brought to us, the more we shall wish to have our appreciation confirmed by others. The more completely we are consecrated to his service, the more clearly we perceive what it would mean for mankind if his ideals could prevail, the more eagerly we must desire comrades to share the struggle with us and reinforce our limited powers.

The Church as the Christian Comradeship

Such a comradeship the church aspires to be. It has its members in all nations and among all races. Its history antedates that of any existing state. Through the church we become part of a great company which no man can number, whose members, differing though they may in race, in language, and in customs, yet know that they are sons of one Father and have one leader and master, Jesus Christ.

The church is, to be sure, not the only international society. From various centres—industrial, political, educational, as the case may be—efforts are being made to transcend the barriers of nationality and to create an international consciousness. It is difficult to overestimate what it may mean for the welfare of mankind that nations which have hitherto set no limit to national sovereignty are trying to devise some form of international political organiza-

tion. But political union, however successful, must always remain partial and incomplete, since it rests upon interests which are largely external, and many of which may be temporary. So economic interests appeal only to certain sections of the population, and even the wider interests of education and of art are less comprehensive than humanity. Religion, alone, as we have seen, touches the whole man. Only a religious society, therefore, can be in the fullest sense international.

This society is not confined to the living. It includes also the dead. Christian faith does not admit that death is the end of life. Death is but a portal through which we must pass to enter upon new experiences. It leads into another room in the Father's house where there is different work to be done and fresh knowledge to be acquired. Through the church we may have fellowship with the great men who have preceded us—not in memory only, but as comrades in the same task.

Catholics have preserved the consciousness of this unbroken fellowship in the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. Protestants lost it for a time because of the abuses which had gathered about it. Now the whole Christian world is winning back the comfort and inspiration it has to give.

This company, into whose fellowship we enter, is not confined to those who are members of the organized churches. There is an invisible church which is wider than any ecclesiastical organization, and many who in their lifetime for conscience' sake have broken with the church of their day are members of this spiritual society and contribute their share to its comradeship. Not those only who say "Lord, Lord," Jesus assured us, shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of the Father who is in heaven. How many such there are of every land

and race we shall never know here; but this we know, that whoever and wherever they are, they are our comrades in Christ's church, fellow workers with us in the establishment of his Kingdom.[1]

3. The Church as the Organ of Christ's Spirit in the World

The Church as the Body of Christ

Thus far we have been thinking of the church as a human society; a society differing, indeed, from other human societies in that the bond of union between its members is the consciousness of a common relationship to God, but still a company of men and women with needs like other men who turn for sympathy and reinforcement to their fellows.

But the church has always meant more than this. The comradeship into which it introduces us is not only that of men with men, but of man with God. Through the church God carries on the work of revelation and of redemption which he began in Jesus Christ. What his human body was to the men with whom he walked and taught in Galilee and in Jerusalem, that his disciples were to be to the men and women of later generations. They were to be lips to speak his message, feet to carry his gospel, eyes to see his opportunity, hands to do his work, shoulders to bear his cross, hearts to thrill with his love. And what each Christian was to do and to be in his own personal and individual life, all were to do and to be together. The church, Saint Paul tells us, is the body of Christ, and each of its members fulfils his true destiny only as he ministers to the life of the whole.[2]

The figure of the body is but one of many used

[1] Even the Roman Catholic Church admits the existence of such persons, though theologians differ as to the explanation of the fact.
[2] I Cor. 12:12–27.

of the church in the New Testament. The church is compared to a building, of which Christ is the foundation[1]; a commonwealth, of which he is the head[2]; a bride, of which he is the husband[3]; a temple, in which God's Spirit dwells.[4] All these figures remind us that no description of the church as a purely human institution can do justice to the divine intention. The church is pictured in the New Testament as the organ through which Christ's Spirit functions in the world and the way is prepared for his Kingdom.

And this, in fact, is what the church has meant to multitudes of Christians in all generations. In spite of the imperfections of its human representatives, the church has been the means through which men and women conscious of sin and longing for forgiveness have found their way to God. To the weary it has brought strength, to the doubting reassurance, to the sorrowing comfort, to the ignorant guidance. It was through the church, as represented in the person of its great bishop, Ambrose of Milan, that Augustine heard the voice of God speaking to him. It was in the haven of Mother Church that Newman found rest after his years of tossing on the sea of doubt. When Calvin, speaking in the name of the little group of Protestants who had broken with Rome for conscience' sake, wished to describe what the church meant to them, he could find no word more fitting than the endearing term "mother."[5]

[1] I Cor. 3:10, 11. [2] Eph. 2:19.
[3] Eph. 5:23. [4] Eph. 2:21.
[5] *Institutes,* bk. IV, I, 1: "I will begin with the Church, into whose bosom God is pleased to collect his children, not only that by her aid and ministry they may be nourished so long as they are babes and children, but may also be guarded by her maternal care until they grow up to manhood, and, finally, attain to the perfection of faith. What God has thus joined, let no man put asunder (Mark 10:9): to those to whom he is a Father, the Church must also be a mother."

A similar note of affection recurs in the familiar hymn of that stout old Puritan, Timothy Dwight:

> "I love thy Kingdom, Lord,
> The house of thine abode,
> The Church our blest Redeemer saved
> With his own precious blood."

The Westminster Confession of Faith, the most authoritative of all the expositions of classical Protestantism, defines the visible church as "the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."[1] And nearly three hundred years later the representatives of the churches assembled at Lausanne began their statement of the nature of the church with the following words: "God, who has given us the Gospel for the salvation of the world, has appointed his Church to witness by life and word to its redeeming power."[2]

It is only as we approach the church from this angle that we can appreciate wherein it differs from other human institutions. The church has done and is doing to-day many things which are being done by other agencies: Teaching, healing, nursing, social reform, philanthropy in the widest sense. But these are all by-products of the church's main purpose, which is to help men to realize the fact of God and what follows from this fact for the life of individuals and for society. The church shares the responsibility for education with the school and the university; for healing, with the hospital and the sanitarium; for social reform, with the statesman and the politician; for philanthropy, with all who love their kind. Worship is its specialty. The church alone has for its primary aim to help men to realize their common brotherhood as sons of God.

[1] Chap. XXV, 2.

[2] *Faith and Order*. Proceedings of the World Conference, Lausanne, August 3–21, 1927 (New York, 1927), p. 419.

That God can use so human an institution as the church for his purpose of self-revelation is often hard to understand. But the difficulty is no greater in principle than that which meets us wherever we try to understand the relation between God and man. We face it when we study the workings of God's Spirit in our own lives. We face it when we follow the course of God's providence in history. Above all, we face it in the person of our Lord. Wherever God and man meet there is mystery. How is it possible for the Spirit of God to enter a human life and to use the memory and will of man for the accomplishment of his purpose? Who will teach us how to recognize God's presence in history and to discern amid the conflict of rival purposes the outworking of a divine plan? How can one explain God's presence in Jesus, the most human yet the most divine of men? When we are able to answer these questions, we may hope to understand God's presence in the church and to distinguish what is human in it and what divine.

Why Men Criticise the Church

It is only when we think of the church in this dual capacity, as at once the company of Christian disciples and the organ of Christ's Spirit, that we can justly estimate the criticisms which men are making of the church.

The author of a recent magazine article has written of the collapse of Protestantism.[1] He brings together the main counts in the current indictment of the contemporary church—its sectarianism, its provincialism, its reactionary theology, its antiquated and ineffective organization, the dependence of its ministers on the laymen who supply the funds, its

[1] The two paragraphs which follow are taken from an article by the author in the *Yale Review* for October, 1927, entitled "New Signs in Religion" (pp. 120–122), and are here reproduced by the courtesy of the editor.

failure to embody in its organized life the principles of freedom and of democracy to which it owes its origin. All these faults, no doubt, and many more, are to be found in the church to-day, and those who remind us of them are quite within their rights. But it would not be difficult to show that, organization for organization, they are no more in evidence in the church than in any other institution of like magnitude. Before the death-sentence of the church is pronounced and the corpse finally laid out for burial, it will be necessary to produce some substitute which can fill the empty place and carry on the church's work more effectively than the church has done it. When we turn to the critics for such a substitute, however, we find that they have nothing to offer us. The faults they find in the church are there because they are first in human nature, and before we can have a church after our heart's desire we must discover some way of dealing effectively with this most familiar, yet most stubborn, of obstacles.

But this is just what the church has always professed to do. If churchmen claimed for the church no more than that it was a human society among human societies, dealing with man's ancient ills after the manner of men, they could make a case for it quite as convincing as the case that can be made for its ancient associates, the state and the school. But this method of defense is not open to them. From of old the church has offered itself to men as the organ of the divine revelation, professing to speak for God and to mediate his life to man. Everything else it has done—its social service, its moral reform, its human fellowship, its contribution to science and to art—are incidental by-products of this greater ministry. The chief indictment against the church, and the only one that really matters, is that it has failed to render this unique service. It has tried to satisfy

men with substitutes for an authoritative revelation: human imitations of the real thing.

What is the reason for this failure? Is it due to faults in the character of the men and women who make up the church, or is the root of the trouble in the way they are organized, or perhaps in the fact that they are organized at all?

The answers which we give to these questions will depend upon the view we take of the spiritual significance of institutions and the extent to which they can be made responsive to the changing needs of a developing religious life.

4. The Problem of Institutional Christianity

How Institutions Arise

When a group of people wish to give effective expression to a common purpose, they find that they must organize. They adopt a constitution, pass laws, elect officers, and acquire property. When they have lasted long enough to have a history, the organization thus founded becomes an institution. An institution may be defined as an organization through which, in a world of space and time, people function for common purposes.[1]

Institutions are instructive because they reveal what has significance for many persons, and even more because they show what interests persist from one generation to another. The outward machinery is important in the measure that it expresses this inner meaning.

[1] Those who take the aristocratic view of society believe that the authority to make law and appoint officers is vested in the few, and that it is the duty of the mass of the people to obey those whom God has appointed to rule over them. Those who take the democratic view vest sovereignty in the people as a whole and regard government as the instrument which they have created to carry out their will. But in each case the distinguishing mark of the institution is the presence of laws to be obeyed and officials to execute them.

The difficulty is that the union between the inner and the outer is never perfect. Lips and eyes never completely express what the spirit would say. Organization is never wholly adequate to the needs of the persons who use it. Interest shifts. Changing conditions make new adaptations necessary. Words lose their original meaning and become unintelligible to later generations. But when you have built a house, or passed a law, or adopted a creed, or established a bishopric, you have created something which has an existence of its own and cannot be changed at will. The older an institution grows, the longer it lasts, the greater the danger that it will cease to serve the needs of the spirit, the more stubborn the resistance that the mere fact of its antiquity puts in the way of change.

If institutions wore out all at once, like "the deacon's one-hoss shay," the matter would be simple. But they grow old in parts. Part of the machinery still serves its purpose while the rest has become obsolete. Conscience pulls now one way, now another, now exhorting us to patience, now summoning us to change. In every organization we find a group who desire change opposed to a group who resist it. Sometimes the strain may be greater, sometimes less. When it becomes too great to be dealt with by the ordinary methods prescribed by law, we have a break. We call that break a "revolution."

The strain that comes from this conflict of loyalties is apparent in political history. The Constitution of the United States is not simply a legal document prescribing rules for action. It is the expression of a political philosophy, the Confession of Faith of a great people. It embodies convictions to which the nation owes its existence and which have been embraced with passionate conviction by multitudes of patriotic Americans. But these convictions

were formulated in a definite historical situation to meet a particular need. The men who composed the Constitution could not anticipate what the future would bring forth or provide for the unforeseen contingencies which it might bring with it. We find that it has been necessary to amend the Constitution in more than one particular, and in the last few years this need has been felt with increasing frequency and poignancy.[1] The process of amendment is, however, cumbrous, and the delay that is involved often costly. Nor has the result reached always been such as to reflect the sincere conviction of all the people. Some political thinkers, therefore, question the wisdom of a fixed constitution and advocate a more flexible form of government, like that of Great Britain, where it is possible for a majority at any time to carry out its will.

Yet no form of government, however flexible, can at any moment perfectly reflect the will of all the people. Under the impulse of some passing mood or skilful agitation, action may be taken which runs counter to the will of the silent majority. Law may protect liberty as well as restrain it. It guarantees rights which but for its existence would be jeopardized. Often it proves the most effective way of appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober.

The Problem of Institutional Christianity

Religious institutions are no exception to the rule that wherever we find organization we find strain. In church, as in state, the adaptation of means to end is never perfect. The servant tends to become the master, the institution to be identified with the spiritual life it is designed to serve; and where this is the case, tension is inevitable. The forms which were

[1] *Cf.* Pierson, C. W., *Our Changing Constitution* (New York, 1922).

once the natural expression of the Christian experience are now for many earnest people an obstacle to faith. But while this is true for some, others do not think in the same way. Maladjustment is not uniform. There are people who feel at home in the church and want nothing changed; there are those who wish to keep certain things and to change others; there are still others who see no hope except in breaking with the church altogether.[1]

Different Views of the Organized Church

These difficulties, inevitable in the nature of the case, are intensified by the sanctity which attaches to everything that is religious. In a matter so important as the church, men have been unwilling to believe that God could leave anything indefinite or uncertain. Accordingly, they have attributed a divine origin, not only to the society of persons whom Jesus gathered about himself, but to the forms and doctrines through which their organized life has found expression. They have explained the protests which from time to time have been raised against the existing church as due to men's impatience of control, their unwillingness to submit to the authority which God has provided for their guidance and discipline. And when in the course of history the church has been divided and rival institutions have confronted one another, each claiming to be the true church, they have extended to each of the parts the attributes of infallibility and authority which originally attached to the whole.

[1] Doctor John Haynes Holmes has expressed this conviction in a book, *New Churches for Old* (New York, 1922), in which he contends that no one of the existing churches can satisfy the needs of the religiously minded men of to-day and urges the formation of a brand-new church on an entirely different basis. Professor Kirsopp Lake is not even sure that the organization through which our successors will give social expression to their religious life will be called a church at all. Compare his *Religion of Yesterday and To-morrow* (New York, 1925), p. 164.

The most consistent exponent of the view that Jesus not only founded a church but prescribed definite forms for its organization and government, which are authoritative for all succeeding generations, is the Roman Catholic Church. Roman Catholics do not deny that there is a difference between the institution and the persons whom it is designed to serve. They distinguish as clearly as Protestants between the church visible and the church invisible, and admit that many who belong to the visible church are not true members of the church invisible. Dante was a good Catholic, but when he visited hell he found more than one pope there. But Roman Catholics insist that the imperfection of men cannot impair the divine significance of the institution they serve or weaken its authority. On the contrary, God's purpose in founding his church was to create a vehicle for the impartation of his grace which would be independent of human limitations. A similar conception of the church is held by the Eastern Orthodox Church and by the Anglo-Catholic party in the Anglican and Protestant Episcopal Churches.

There are Protestants who, in spite of the fact that they reject the Roman theory, really think of the church in the same way. They regard it as independent of the persons who compose it, a matter of faith or order, of creed or sacrament. The Protestant principle of the sole authority of Scripture is often cited to prove that Protestants do not recognize the authority of the church, whereas it is really the definition of the kind of church to which the Protestant belongs; namely, the church which admits to its membership those, and those only, who find God uniquely revealing himself in the Bible. While in theory this principle appears to open the door of the church to all who accept the authority of the Bible, however much they may differ in their inter-

pretation of it, in practice each group of Protestants has identified the teaching of the Bible with its own understanding of it and made the real test of church-membership acceptance of some creed, written or unwritten.

The difficulty with any rigid theory of the church, whether Catholic or Protestant, is that it has room only for a single institution. There cannot be more than one infallible church. But in practice we are confronted not by one but by many claimants. The list of churches which have claimed divine authority for their distinctive tenets would be a surprisingly long one and include many of whose existence, I suspect, many of us have heretofore had no knowledge. I have in my library a little book (privately printed in 1918) which records the Minutes of the Church of the Baptized Brethren in Royalton, Vermont. This was a congregation which was organized in 1790 as a protest against the established Congregational Church of that place because of its lapse from the New Testament standard in respect to baptism. The record of the meetings of the new organization would seem to show that most of the time of its members was occupied in examining and excommunicating one another.

This spectacle of rival churches, each claiming divine sanction, has brought its inevitable reaction, and many people look upon the entire attempt to standardize religion as a tragic mistake and see no hope for the future but in a complete break with institutional Christianity. The church in which they believe, the church to which they are conscious of belonging, is the company of men and women, of whatever name or race, who are living the life of love in the spirit of Jesus. It is the church to which Lincoln belonged and many another gracious spirit whose name will be sought in vain on the rolls of the

organized churches. This invisible church, whose numbers are known only to God, they believe to be the true church of Jesus Christ, the authentic organ of his spirit.

Of all Christian bodies, the Society of Friends has been most consistent in its opposition to ecclesiastical organization. The Friends regard the church as a purely spiritual society without creed, officers, or sacraments. In their place is put a silent worship in which each participant yields himself up to the inner leading of the Spirit. When the Spirit prompts, one bears one's witness; when there is no leading, the worshipper remains in silence.

Yet organization of some kind we cannot avoid. It belongs to the nature of our life in society. If men really feel together, they will wish to act together, and in order to act together effectively they must organize. Even the Friends are no exception. They have their customs, binding although unwritten, and leaders whom they loyally follow. Many of their societies now have ministers, and call their "meetings" churches. The question is not between organization or no organization, but between an organization that really promotes the spiritual ends it is designed to serve and one that is perpetuated for its own sake because of the interests of those who live by it.[1]

Is an Inclusive Church Possible?

So we find a third view of the nature and function of religious institutions slowly differentiating itself from the other two, a conception which has as yet no generally accepted name. Those who hold this

[1] It is a significant fact that while Episcopalians are urging upon members of the non-Episcopal churches the importance of accepting the episcopate as a condition of the united church, Baptists and Congregationalists are developing what is in effect an episcopate and intrusting to the superintendents and moderators whom they have chosen powers quite as extensive as those now exercised by many bishops.

view agree with the high-churchmen of every school that organization is essential to a healthy spiritual life and that God intended to found a visible church; but they are equally convinced that since God's purpose for man is a developing purpose, the institution through which it is nurtured and expressed must be constantly changing. It must provide not only for differences of maturity in its members but for differences of type. One cannot expect the same kind of worship to satisfy the Anglo-Catholic, with his mystical conception of God and his high doctrine of the sacraments, which satisfies the Methodist, with his evangelical piety and his emphasis upon individual conversion. There must be room in the church, therefore, for different bodies with a large measure of autonomy; but these must be included in some more comprehensive organization through which the unity of the whole may be expressed.

The need and the possibility of such an inclusive church is coming to be recognized by large bodies of Christians in all the denominations. The movement for church unity, which has found expression in such gatherings as the Lambeth Conference of 1920, and the Lausanne Conference of 1927, cannot be accounted for simply by the desire of the high-churchmen of the different communions to bring their fellow Christians of other churches to their own way of thinking. They witness to a growing conviction that no one branch of the church possesses the whole truth; more than this, that no single rigid organization can do justice to the varying phases of Christian experience. There must be some more flexible organization devised, one in which each of the existing types of Christians may feel at home.[1]

[1] The Roman Catholic Church makes provision for this need through its orders for men and women. These are independent and self-governing bodies which cut across the regular diocesan organization and are responsible directly to Rome. The federation

Such a conception of the church is the natural corollary of the view of the world and of the individual to which our enlarging experience of God's method of working seems to be leading us. There was a time when it seemed as if in our view of the world we must choose between a universe of law and a world of miracle. But we have learned that the existence of unchangeable laws, persisting from age to age, far from being inconsistent with new beginnings is their necessary condition. So it once seemed to us that if a man's choices were determined he could not be free. But we now see that it is just the unchanging laws of personality which make choice significant and character-revealing. Why then should we suppose that our institutional life alone is an exception to God's method of dealing with his creatures? Here, too, we may be sure that we are not shut up to the choice between a church that suppresses independence in the interest of authority and a church that rejects organization in the interest of freedom. In the church of the future there will be place both for authority and for freedom, for continuity and for change.

Whether such a comprehensive church will ever be completely realized on earth and, if so, what form it will take only the future can reveal. The shaping of an institution is a long and complicated process, of which no one is wise enough to foresee the outcome, least of all those who are themselves part of the process and apt to be misled by their sympathies and prejudices. The important thing is to recognize that the process is going on and to act accordingly. Since change is inevitable, it is the part of wisdom to ac-

movement in Protestantism, while the outgrowth of a different philosophy of the church, may be regarded as an experiment in the same direction. On the history and present status of this movement, *cf.* Brown, W. Adams, *The Church in America* (New York, 1922), pp. 258 *seq.; Christian Unity: Its Problems and Possibilities* (New York, 1921), pp. 110–150 *seq.*

cept the fact and, while we welcome the new light that comes with the new day, to see to it that in the process of readjustment none of the gains of the past are lost.

What concerns us here, as in every preceding stage of our study, is the ideal toward which we should move. Even if it should never be given to us on earth, finite and imperfect creatures that we are, completely to realize the divine ideal for the church, at least we may catch glimpses of that ideal and make those glimpses the measure of our present attainment. The virtues we cultivate, the habits we practise in the church of to-day, may be such as to bring the better church nearer. Trust, sympathy, patience, the resolute purpose to know the truth, even if it conflicts with our most cherished opinions, to believe the best, even if it means that we must discard our most deep-seated prejudices; these are qualities which not only contribute to the right relation between individuals; they are the indispensable conditions of the more inclusive church for which we wait.

5. The Living Church as Interpreter of the New Meanings in the Old Gospel

The Creed as Help and as Hindrance

The situation which we have thus briefly analyzed raises many perplexing questions for the sensitive conscience. Some of these are of more immediate practical importance, having to do with our relationship to the church as it exists to-day. Others are of fundamental character and are concerned with the divine ideal for the church. What place in this ideal have the institutional features which play so large a rôle in our present life and what can we do to bring the churches, as they exist to-day, into closer conformity with the mind of Christ?

To begin with the practical question, the question presented by the contrast between the existing law of the churches and the stage of intellectual and spiritual development to which God's Spirit has led the men and women who must live under that law. This problem, present in every phase of the church's life, becomes especially acute in connection with the creed.

The difficulty which the creed presents may be illustrated both in connection with the briefer creeds which are used in worship and the longer and more theological creeds which are designed primarily for instruction.

Take, for example, the briefest and most familiar of all the Christian symbols, the Apostles' creed. This creed was originally used in connection with the baptism of converts. It was the personal confession of faith which each new believer made when he joined the Christian brotherhood. But it early came to be used as a test of orthodoxy—a formula by which it could be determined whether a man was a heretic or not. This double use has continued all through the centuries and is to-day the source of many perplexities. When we use the Apostles' creed as it was originally meant to be used, as a confession of faith, a convenient means of voicing the convictions which Christians hold in common—those facts for faith which, as we have seen, lie back of sense and require spiritual insight for their apprehension—it will be found to justify the central place which the church has given it. The very fact that it goes back so many centuries and has survived so many changes gives it value as a witness to the continuity of the Christian experience which no more recent creed, however intellectually congenial, can possibly have.

But when we take a statement that was the natural expression of the faith of one generation and make it a law which limits the freedom of all succeeding

generations, we issue a challenge to the critical spirit which cannot but work divisively. The creed becomes a test of theological opinion, the standard by which men judge one another's attitude toward controverted points of doctrine, and the finer test by which Jesus was accustomed to measure faith in himself is obscured.[1]

The issue becomes still more acute when we turn to those longer and more theological creeds, like the Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession of Faith, which define the Protestant position in its contrast to Rome. These creeds, too, when judged by their original intention, are more than statements of doctrine in the technical sense. They presuppose a personal religious experience and can be understood only by those who share this experience. They define what men thought about the great themes of religion in an age when uniformity of belief was everywhere assumed to be a necessary consequence of personal piety, and the lessons which God has been teaching his church during the last three centuries were still unlearned.

What was appropriate and natural under the conditions which then obtained has become a source of embarrassment to the church of to-day. To those who take language seriously it seems inappropriate to call a creed as technical and controversial as that of Westminster a Confession of Faith; and when, as in the case of Doctor Briggs, the attempt is made to make this creed the law by which present-day belief is to be judged, the consequences cannot but be disastrous.

[1] A still more striking illustration of the difficulty to which the use of creeds as law gives rise is furnished by the creed which parallels the Apostles' Creed in the East—the so-called "Nicene Creed." *Cf.* p. 183.

What to Do with the Creeds We Have

There are three possible attitudes which one may take to a creed which no longer adequately expresses the beliefs of those who live under it. One may ignore it; one may repeal it; one may reinterpret it.

We may illustrate these different attitudes in connection with those secular laws which no longer reflect the present moral sentiment of the community. Some laws are simply ignored, like the old blue-laws of Connecticut. They fall into innocuous desuetude and are forgotten until some zealous student rediscovers them in the statute-book. Where the public sentiment of the majority is still in favor of law enforcement, the conscientious objector may publicly disobey the law in order to call attention to what seems to him its iniquitous character, as the Pacifists do in connection with the law of military service and as some opponents of the Eighteenth Amendment tell us they are doing to-day.

A second way of dealing with a law that has outlived its usefulness is to repeal it. This is the most satisfactory method when it is possible, but in practice it proves extremely difficult, partly because it is hard to interest enough people in the repeal to carry it through, partly because of the existence of a strong minority which has not yet appreciated that repeal is desirable.

Under these circumstances there remains a third method—that of reinterpretation. Granting that the literal form in which the law stands in the statute-books does not correspond to our present needs, it may be that the purpose for which it was designed is a purpose in which we still believe. Let us ask ourselves, therefore, how those who framed the law would have phrased it if they had been enacting it to-day, and let us require of people only such conduct as is

in accord with this revised interpretation. This is what the civil courts are doing all the time, from the lowest to the highest of them. The Constitution of the United States has been amended nineteen times by the formal action of the States, but it is being amended all the time and in even more important ways by the continual reinterpretation which is being given to it by the Supreme Court.

The Living Church as Interpreter

All three of these methods are being used in the church to-day. Some statements in the creeds we ignore because they have so completely lost their meaning for the present generation that there is no longer any important section of the church which understands them in their original sense. This is true of the statement concerning the six days of creation, or the descent of our Saviour to a literal hell beneath the earth. Other statements we deal with by way of amendment or repeal, as when we revise our constitutions by official ecclesiastical action or put forth a declaratory statement, giving the sense in which the creed is to be understood. But the commonest method and the one which most concerns us here is the method of reinterpretation. We may ask of the older creeds, just as the justices of the Supreme Court ask of the Constitution: What did the men who made these creeds wish to accomplish? What was their dominant interest? How can we express in the language of our own time the central verities they meant to affirm? This is what theology has always been doing, and it is an entirely legitimate and necessary thing to do.

Those who insist that every creed must be taken in its literal sense fail to realize how complicated are the issues involved in the interpretation of a creed. They are questions which have to do with the meaning of

language and the relative weight to be attached to different emphases in the interpretation of ancient documents. What exactly did the Apostle Paul mean when he said that God made Christ sin for us, or the bishops at Nicæa when they spoke of the Son as of one substance with the Father; and how much importance did they attach to what they said at one point as compared to what they said at another? On the face of it these are questions of a purely antiquarian character to be determined by the grammarian or the historian. What gives them their living interest to the men of to-day is the fact that the answer which is given to them will determine the limits of fellowship in the Christian Church. Into the determination of this larger question other factors must of necessity enter than those of grammar and history—factors such as the later experience of the church and the present witness of God's Spirit. According as a man gives these "imponderables" greater or less weight in his view of the evidence to be considered will be the conclusions he reaches. Fundamentalists are for the most part strict constructionists. They are for the law as it stands. Modernists are for a liberal interpretation lest the letter kill the spirit. It is not that one party affirms the creed and the other denies it, but that what one party intends as affirmation seems to the other denial.

This difference we have seen is inherent in human nature. There have always been men of these different types, and there always will be. But it is reinforced by the nature of language. Words are not rigid things that carry their meaning on their face. They mean different things to different people. Words express emotions as well as ideas. They register loyalties as well as convey meanings. And loyalties and emotions are alike in process of constant change. "A word is not a crystal, transparent and

unchanged. It is the skin of a living thought, and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and the time in which it is used."[1]

These facts we must bear in mind when we approach the matter of creed subscription. When I affirm my faith in the deity of Christ I do more than profess my acceptance of the historic doctrines which express the mystery of his person. I confess his right to regulate my conduct and to determine my standards of judgment. Usually these two meanings go together, but not always. There are people who confess Christ's deity with the lips but deny it in their life, and vice versa. When I must choose between those who say "Lord, Lord," and those who "do his will," to which interpretation of his deity shall I give precedence?

Nor is it simply that the same word may have more than one meaning. Meanings change from time to time. What once seemed all-important is gradually relegated to a subordinate position. New interests hold the centre of attention. For Augustine and for Martin Luther hell was a place beneath the earth to which departed spirits descended at death; yet who now would make the literal acceptance of this article of the creed a test of orthodoxy? How much, on the other hand, which was hidden from Fathers and Reformers we read into the phrase "Maker of heaven and earth." To the men who wrote the creed, the world was a definite magnitude with fixed bounds in time and space. How much greater must that power be which could fashion the universe which modern science reveals to us—a finite which in a very real sense has put on the garments of infinity, a creation whose mysteries call forth in the reverent student sentiments of wonder and awe which in the older religion were reserved for the Creator alone.

[1] Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes, quoted in Towne *v.* Eisner, *U. S. Reports*, 245, p. 425.

No conception in the Bible is more familiar, none more central in Jesus' teaching, than the Kingdom of God. Yet we have already seen how differently it has been interpreted. For the Christians of the first century it was a Kingdom of earthly triumph and prosperity, to be introduced by a sudden transformation of the present order of things; for the bishops of the mediæval church, the reign of the church on earth; for the Reformers, the purified church of Protestantism; for the religious thinkers of the last generation, a new social order to be brought about by a gradual transformation of the existing institutions of society. Yet all read the same Bible, all professed the same faith, all saw in Jesus the Messiah, the Lord of the Kingdom that was to be.

This process of reinterpretation has been going on from the beginning of Christian history and it is going on to-day. The official changes in the church's law are only the public registry of earlier changes which have taken place in the conviction of individual Christians. To know what the church really believes at any time, you must go back of the letter of the creed to the spirit in which it is interpreted, not on the rare occasions when church courts meet to register their formal decisions, but in the life of every day. You must listen to bishops as they talk with the young men who come to take counsel with them as to whether they should enter the ministry. You must sit in council or presbytery when they hear some candidate of sensitive conscience explain his scruples and interpret to him the indefinite phrase "substance of doctrine." You must hear what the ministers are preaching. You must read what the scholars are writing. Above all, you must follow the missionary work of the church and see how the men who are in contact with other religions interpret the creed when they are asked the one question which matters, what

there is in the Christian religion that can change life for the better and set the imprisoned spirit free.

Such an interchange of view is now going on in every country of Christendom, and most intensively in the new churches that are rising on what we used to call the mission field. But we have not yet learned to appreciate the significance of what we see. We think of the debate in its human aspects, as an exchange of views between men who differ. We do not realize that it is the laboratory in which God, the Creative Spirit, is opening our minds to new meanings in the ancient gospel and presenting to us fresh opportunities of spiritual achievement and happiness.

There can be no such thing, then, as a changeless creed in a changing world. Creeds remain the same only by changing. The question is simply how the change shall be brought about. Shall the needed reinterpretation be carried on in an opportunistic way, each situation being dealt with as it arises, or shall we face the fact that reinterpretation there must be and provide that it shall take place in orderly fashion? The difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants is not that one recognizes the function of the living church in the interpretation of the creed and the other does not, but that one provides for the exercise of this function in ways consistent with its genius and the other has thus far been content to evade the responsibility and leave the issue to be determined in indirect and haphazard ways.

One of the greatest needs in the church to-day is some method of procedure by which the limits of legitimate variation in belief can be determined in ways that are congenial to the spirit of the Christian religion. Such machinery as we now have in many of our churches is a crude attempt to apply the method of criminal procedure appropriate to a trial for theft or perjury to the delicate questions involved in the definition of religious faith.

In a heresy trial there is a contest between prosecutor and defendant in which each tries to prove that he is right and his opponent wrong. What advantage, either to the cause of truth or of justice, can we anticipate from such a method of procedure? It is the genius of the Christian religion that each should believe the best of his neighbor and should rejoice in whatever outcome puts him in the right. Besides our formal ecclesiastical courts we need some natural forum for the free discussion of differences of belief in which chief emphasis shall be laid upon the things which unite rather than upon the things that divide. Through such discussion, carried on in an atmosphere of confidence and good-will, it should be possible to distinguish the central convictions which determine character and affect conduct from the theories by which from time to time men have attempted to explain and to defend them; and those who are really of one mind and of one heart would learn to recognize one another.[1]

[1] An example of what may be accomplished in this way has been furnished by two gatherings, to which reference has more than once been made in this book—the Stockholm Conference on Life and Work and the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order. In these conferences we see the churches abandoning the method which they have too often been accustomed to use in determining their relations to one another and adopting a new method, the method of friendly interchange of view. Those who came to Stockholm and to Lausanne came not to legislate but to confer. Holding strong convictions themselves, they respected the convictions of those who differed from them and were willing to believe that even through these differences God had some lesson to teach them which they needed to learn.

The result justified the experiment. Those who met in trust and sympathy, parted closer together than when they came. Differences remained, deep-seated and fundamental, but a unity was revealed that was more basic still. Men who differed at almost every point in their view of how the Christian ideal for society was to be reached united in a common confession of social sin and a common acceptance of social responsibility. Men whose view of the place of creeds in the law of the church was diametrically opposed agreed in a common statement of the Christian gospel. Why should not the example thus set be followed by the church at large?

What is true of the creed is true of all the other forms through which the organized church functions, the Bible, the Sacraments, and the ministry. Use them as they were originally meant to be used, as a help to faith, and they are unifying. Impose them as a law upon conscience and they become divisive. The true church, the church through which Christ's Spirit is functioning in the world to-day and the way for his Kingdom is being prepared, is the company of men and women who have enlisted in Christ's cause and who are living for ends he would approve. All else that the church offers us is only means, means useful, indispensable indeed, and because useful and indispensable, divinely used and blessed, for the recruiting, the training, and the organization of these Christ-filled personalities.

To sum up: the final authority, for Protestant as for Catholic, is the living church; final not in the sense that fallible men arbitrarily decide what they will believe and what disbelieve, but in the sense that the present Spirit to whom the Master pointed his disciples for that greater revelation for which they were not ready in his lifetime progressively interprets to the humble and contrite of heart God's purpose for them and for his world. The church fulfils her mission best when ministers and people alike are responsive to this progressive reinterpretation, and, while they hold fast the truth for which the old forms stood, turn toward the future faces that are unafraid.

CHAPTER VIII

The Christian's Guide-Book: or What to Believe About the Bible

1. **Why We Need the Bible.**

   Bible and Sacrament as Means of Grace—How the Conception of Inerrancy Arose—What Inerrancy Means to Catholic and to Protestant—How Modern Scholarship Has Changed Our View of the Bible.

2. **What We Mean by the Bible.**

   The Bible as the Sacred Book of the Church—The Bible as the Record of God's Progressive Self-Revelation—The Bible as the Book That Introduces Us to Jesus Christ—The Bible as Source of Present Inspiration.

3. **What the Bible Can Do for Us.**

   What Makes the Bible a Means of Grace—What the Bible Can Do for Us—The Final Question.

The Bible is the sacred book of the Christian Church. It is the record of God's progressive self-revelation, first to the people of Israel, afterward to the world in Jesus Christ. It tells us not only what men have thought of God and what they have done for God but what they have experienced of God. Thus by bringing us in touch with the men and women who have found God before us, it encourages us to believe that we can find God for ourselves and it shows us how to do so.

Above all, the Bible makes us acquainted with Jesus Christ, in whose person the divine revelation culminates and so gives us a standard by which we can discriminate between what is transient and what is permanent in the revelations of the past.

This way of thinking of the Bible as the story of a progressive revelation is a source of perplexity to those who have been taught to think of the Bible as an inerrant book, teaching a uniform doctrine. They forget that a book which is to be the Bible for mankind must have something for people at every stage of their development. As the assumption of human nature, with all its limitations, was the condition of God's self-revelation in Jesus, so the fact that the writers of the Bible were men of their own day was the necessary condition of their producing a book which could be the Bible for all time.

1. Why We Need the Bible

Bible and Sacrament as Means of Grace

Among the helps which the church uses in its work of making God known to man, the Bible and the sacraments have from time immemorial held the place of honor as God's appointed means of grace.

The Bible puts the story of divine revelation into words and appeals to the intelligence as well as to the feelings of the reader. The sacraments picture the central verities of the faith in acts which make their primary appeal to the emotions. When we read the Bible, God is speaking to us through the mind; when we approach the Lord's table, he is speaking to us through the affections and the will.

Yet the contrast may easily be exaggerated. In the last analysis, Bible and sacrament are not two ways of God's revealing himself, but one. Revelation is God speaking to man. Sometimes he speaks to the ear through the spoken word, and the medium and record of that way of his speaking is the Bible. Sometimes he speaks to the eye through the acted word, and the medium of that way of his speaking is the sacrament. Neither method of God's revealing himself fulfils its true function unless what is said is understood. In both the whole man is active, mind, emotions, and will.

As a result of a mistaken conception of revelation, both Bible and sacrament have been contrasted with other ways of God's revealing himself as wholly exceptional and extraordinary. The Bible has been represented as a book unlike all other books both in composition and in content. In like manner a mysterious efficacy has been attributed to the sacrament, wholly independent of the faith that is brought to its

reception. The result has been that many thoughtful people in our day have altogether ceased to use either Bible or sacrament and are losing the spiritual help which they are fitted to give.

How the Conception of Inerrancy Arose

To understand how this change has come about, we must remind ourselves how the Bible came to hold its central place in the religious life of Protestants. The Reformation began as a protest against the superstitions of the mediæval church. The sacraments in Luther's day had in many places become magical ceremonies administered by a hierarchy of priests in all but complete divorce from the moral and spiritual realities which they symbolized. Luther protested against this divorce. He insisted upon the central place of faith in religion, and in doing so he appealed to the authority of Jesus and his disciples, notably to Saint Paul. It was because the Bible preserved the witness of these disciples and proved in experience a most efficacious way of stimulating and purifying the life of faith that he and his successors broke the chains by which the church had kept the Bible from the people and restored it to its central place in the life of worship.

But with the passage of time and the waning of the first enthusiasm the same thing happened to the Bible which had happened to the sacrament. It became separated from the life of faith. Protestants came to think of the Bible just as Roman Catholics had thought of the sacrament, as something wholly mysterious and exceptional. The Bible, the theologians taught, was an inerrant book, perfect in all its parts, through which God spoke to men with such completeness and authority that it was impossible to misunderstand what he said. While other books are written in the language and make use of the ideas of

their time, the writers of the Bible were supposed to have been raised above the limitations of humanity and to have written as amanuenses of the Holy Ghost. While the meaning of other books is gradually discerned as we put them to the test of life, correcting the misunderstandings of one generation by the clearer insight of the next, the Bible alone was believed to yield up its meaning immediately and to convey to a devout reader infallibly the message God had for him.

It was the desire for certainty which brought about the change of attitude in the case of the Bible, as it had already brought about a corresponding change in the case of the sacrament. Men long for a final and authoritative revelation, a revelation which will relieve them of all responsibility and will put the whole weight upon God alone; and such a final and authoritative revelation the inerrant Bible seemed to give. But, in fact, the Bible has not proved to be a book of this kind. The proof of this is not that scholars find errors in the Bible. It is always possible for an ingenious commentator to explain these errors away.[1] The convincing proof is that the Bible has not done what an infallible book is expected to do. It has not given its message in such clear and unmistakable form that all Christians have agreed as to its meaning. Scholars who have studied the original text have understood the book differently from readers who have only the English translation. And recourse to the original text has not secured agreement among scholars. Catholic scholars have differed from Protestants, and Protestants have differed among themselves. The view of the Bible as an inerrant book has not united Christians; it has divided them.

[1] One of the most plausible ways of doing this is to say that while there are errors in our present text and still more in our translations, they were not in the original. This is the theory of the so-called "inerrant autographs."

What Inerrancy Means to Catholic and to Protestant

The Roman Catholic Church meets this difficulty by putting the responsibility for interpreting the Bible upon the church. An infallible revelation requires an infallible interpreter, and such an infallible interpreter Roman Catholics believe the Pope to be when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, as the head of an ecumenical council duly called for the purpose. The substance of this inspired interpretation is preserved in the creed and in the tradition of the church, which Catholics recognize as equally authoritative with the Bible.

We have learned by experience that the measure of agreement which Catholics exact is neither possible nor necessary. Most Protestants admit that there are things in the Bible, even concerning the nature and government of the church, on which good Christians may differ.[1] They, therefore, confine the authority of the Bible to those central and essential matters which are necessary for salvation. They further recognize that the mere fact that there are errors in the text of our present Bible is no obstacle to its fulfilling its appointed function as a medium of divine revelation, but that it is possible for the ordinary believer to find his way to God through the fallible translation which is the only Bible he has.

How Modern Scholarship Has Changed Our View of the Bible

This is, indeed, the only view which does full justice to the facts. We know to-day that the history of the books we call our Bible extends over many cen-

[1] *Cf. The Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.*, chap. I, 5: "While . . . they think it necessary to make effectual provision, that all who are admitted as teachers, be sound in the faith; they also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ."

turies; that these books were composed by authors whose names we know only in part; that they have been edited and re-edited in the course of their transmission. We know that the men who wrote the Bible were, on the human side, children of their age; that they used the methods of composition familiar to their time; that their views of history, of geography, of natural science, were those of their contemporaries. We do not look to them for information as to how the world was created, or how long it has lasted, any more than we should look for such information to the historians of Assyria or of Persia. They were men of their time speaking to men of their time, and they used the language of their time, and, what is more significant, the ideas of their time. Unique as it is in many respects, worthy of the supreme place given it as the sacred book of Christianity, the Bible is a human book to be studied by the methods we apply to other literature and interpreted accordingly.

We know further how the writings that compose our present Bible were collected. This was a process longer and more complicated than is often realized. The Old Testament, the Bible of the Jews, is itself a collection of Bibles: The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, each having its independent history. We know that the Jews did not always agree as to which books belonged in their Bible. The smaller Hebrew Canon differed from the larger Canon of the Septuagint; and a similar debate was carried on in connection with the New Testament. This debate continued for more than two centuries and did not lead to the same result in all parts of the church. Temporarily closed for the Catholic Church by the inclusion of the books we call the Apocrypha, it was reopened at the Reformation; and the Bible of the Protestant differs from the Bible of the Catholic because the former excludes these disputed books, whereas the latter includes them.

Still further, we know how the Bible has been interpreted. Different generations have gone to the Bible for an answer to their questions, and the answers have not been the same. The Bible is the book that tells the Roman Catholic how Christ commissioned Peter to found his church and made him the first of the Popes. The Protestant appeals to the same Bible to justify him in repudiating the Pope and in asserting the right of private judgment. If you are a Calvinist, you will find divine predestination in the Bible; if you are an Arminian, you will find there the freedom of the will. Episcopalians base on the Bible their doctrine of apostolic succession; Presbyterians, their view of the divine right of presbytery; Independents, their belief in the supremacy of the local congregation; and Friends, their rejection of ecclesiastical organization of every kind. There is more truth than satire in the old hexameter:

"Hic liber est in quo quærit sua dogmata quisque."[1]

Looked at from this angle, the history of biblical interpretation is the story of how men have sought confirmation for their own preconceived ideas in the Bible and have found what they sought. In the light of such a history, it has become difficult, if not impossible, for many people any longer to think of the Bible as a supernatural book, inerrant in all its parts, to which a man can go for an answer to points in controversy between himself and his opponents and be confident that he will find an authoritative answer.

What conclusion shall we draw from these facts? Since the Bible is not in all respects a different kind of book from other books, shall we then conclude that it differs from them in no respect? Since it does not bring us the kind of revelation we have been told to

[1] "This is the book in which each one looks for his own doctrines."

expect, shall we infer that it brings us no revelation at all? To do this would be to exchange one misconception for another. The Bible is not, to be sure, an inerrant book which relieves us of the necessity of independent judgment, but it is still our most trustworthy source of religious knowledge; it is the book which is able to guide us where we most need guidance.

2. What We Mean by the Bible

The Bible as the Sacred Book of the Church

What, then, are the facts about the Bible which must determine the use that we make of it? The first is that it is a book with a history.

The Bible, as the name implies,[1] is not a single book, but a collection of books, or, to speak more accurately, two collections. The Old Testament is the Bible of the Jews; the New Testament is the sacred literature of early Christianity. Each collection, as we have said, was a long time in the making and consists of writings partly of known, partly of unknown, date and authorship. These writings differ widely in character and purpose, in literary style and historical accuracy. Some are prose and some are poetry; some are the work of simple people who tell a plain story; others express the thought of philosophers and sages meditating on the mystery of existence. But common to them all and bringing their diversity into a unity is a profound religious interest. They tell the story of God's progressive revelation, first to the people of Israel and afterward to the world through Jesus Christ. These books, so composed and so collected, have now been united in a single volume and are received by the Christian Church as canonical; that is, inspired Scripture.

[1] The word "Bible" means literally "the books."

By a canonical book we mean a book which is received in a religious community as the authoritative expression of its religious convictions and the textbook which is used for the training of its members. Every great religion has such a book or books, and no church could fulfil its functions of inspiration and instruction without them. Hinduism has the Vedas and the Upanishads; Buddhism, the Tripitaka; Confucianism, the Analects; Zoroastrianism, the Zend-Avesta; Mohammedanism, the Koran; Christianity, the Bible.

The importance of the Bible for Christians consists in the fact that it is the one book which is accepted by all Christians. Roman Catholics accept it as well as Protestants, though each gives to it its own interpretation. If ever there is to be an understanding between the divided communions of Christendom, it will be on the basis of their common acceptance of the Bible.

There are two reasons why the Bible deserves and why it must always retain its central place in the lives of Christians. In the first place, as we have seen, it tells the story of God's progressive self-revelation to man. In the second place—and this is quite as important—it preserves the experiences which have accompanied and followed this self-revelation. It is this combination which makes the Bible a unique book. As the most trustworthy record of man's growth, not only in the *knowledge* of God but in the *experience* of God, it is the great source book of religion.

The Bible as the Record of God's Progressive Self-Revelation

Recent study of the Bible shows us that, far from being all on the same moral plane, it records a continually deepening insight and a correspondingly enlarging experience. In the early days of Israel's his-

tory, God evidences his presence in extraordinary and unusual ways. He speaks to Elijah in the earthquake and in the whirlwind.[1] His Spirit falls upon the chosen King of Israel on his return from visiting Samuel, and Saul joins the mad dance of the sons of the prophets just as any wild dervish might do to-day.[2]

As time goes on the moral and spiritual elements in revelation are more fully emphasized. God grants to Amos, to Isaiah, and to their successors flashes of insight, and they interpret to their fellow countrymen the inner meaning of the history of which they are a part. Isaiah sees in Assyria, Israel's conqueror and oppressor, the rod with which God is chastening his rebellious people.[3] Egypt, their ancient foe and tyrant, is some day to become their trusted friend.[4] Cyrus, King of Persia, is God's agent in bringing his people back from captivity and reestablishing them in their ancient home.[5] Israel itself is the chosen servant of Jehovah, through whom his message of righteousness and peace is to be brought to the nations.[6]

A similar change takes place in the view of nature. Not only in her savage moods of whirlwind and lightning, but in the orderly processes that recur from day to day and from generation to generation she has spiritual lessons to teach. The great prophet who wrote the fortieth chapter of Isaiah looks up at the stars that fill the Persian sky and he sees more than a galaxy of lights twinkling in the firmament. He perceives countless and reassuring witnesses to the greatness of God.[7]

Other parts of the Bible give hints of a still more wonderful revelation. The Psalmist assures us that to

[1] I Kings 19:11.
[2] I Sam. 10:10–13.
[3] Isaiah 10:5.
[4] Isaiah 19:24, 25.
[5] Isaiah 44:28; 45:1.
[6] Isaiah 41:8, 9. *Cf.* 42:1.
[7] Isaiah 40:26–31.

those who yield themselves to God in humility and contrition his presence is granted as a continuing possession. His indwelling Spirit will create within them a clean heart; and the spirit of man thus purified and refined will become a habitation in which God will make his abode, a shrine fitted for his worship.[1]

Nor is this all. What is now granted to exceptional individuals and for brief periods of time is some day, the prophet Joel assures us, to become the common possession of all men. The time is coming when the Spirit of God will be poured forth upon all flesh. The young men will see visions; the old will dream dreams; humanity as a whole, women as well as men, will become the organ through which God's Spirit can express itself and accomplish his purpose in the world.[2]

The presence of these different strata in the Bible makes it hard for many people to understand how the book can be considered a divine revelation. They forget that the Bible is a book for other ages as well as for our own. In God's school there are scholars of all grades, and we need something not only for those who are graduating from high school into college but for those who are in the kindergarten and grammar grades.

Miss Jean Kenyon Mackenzie has given us a vivid picture of what the Bible is doing to-day for some of these primitive scholars. In her fascinating book, *An African Trail*,[3] she tells us what the Ten Commandments mean to the Bulus of Central Africa. We think of the commandments as a set of precepts, largely negative in character, which we contrast as external with Jesus' law of love. But these simple folk receive the commandments as a veritable gospel. Before the missionaries came they believed themselves

[1] Psalms 51:10, 11. *Cf.* Isaiah 57:15.
[2] Joel 2:28, 29.
[3] West Medford, Mass., 1917.

surrounded by a host of arbitrary and irresponsible spirits on whose every whim they were dependent. Now they know that there is but one God with whose righteous will they have to do. Through the discovery of law, with all for which law stands, the Bulus have been delivered from their worst fear, the fear of the incalculable. Later, when law has hardened into a rigid code and authority taken the form of precepts imposed from without, a new message will be needed and the scholars will enter a higher grade. They will then be ready for Paul's teaching about the law as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ and will understand the meaning of his new commandment of love.

This view of the Bible as the story of a progressive revelation helps us to understand the point at issue between Fundamentalist and Modernist as to the errors in the Bible. The Fundamentalist contends that the Modernist's view of the Bible as a book which contains errors robs its message of authority and certainty. But the Modernist does not consider that the errors in the Bible affect its purpose at all. They are inevitable accompaniments of the process of revelation, temporary forms through which the one message needed was conveyed to an individual or to an age. Let us admit that the scientific conceptions of the first chapter of Genesis do not differ in essentials from those of the contemporary Assyrian and Babylonian cosmologies, the fact remains that the account of the creation in Genesis reveals a truth which was hidden from Assyria and Babylonia—the truth, namely, that the agent in creation is the Spirit of God. Let us admit that we no longer hold the primitive world view in which the contemporaries of Jesus pictured the coming of the Kingdom. That need not prevent us from sharing Jesus' faith in the better society to come.

The Bible as the Book That Introduces Us to Jesus Christ

But if the Bible records such widely different stages of spiritual development, how are we to discriminate between them; how can we tell what part of the Bible is revelation and what is setting? There is one very simple and effective way to do this. It is to bring everything the book contains into touch with the central personality in whom its story culminates —the Lord Jesus Christ.

If there were no other reason for giving the Bible its central place, the fact that it makes us acquainted with Jesus would be reason enough. The Bible is the most direct and reliable source for our knowledge of him. It tells us the story of his life. It gives the substance of his teaching. It presents us with a picture of his character. It records the influence which he exerted over those who first came under the spell of his personality. It shows us what he means for our thought of God. In Jesus we see the goal toward which the whole process of Old Testament revelation has been leading us.

And the Bible not only shows us how Jesus fulfils the ideals of the past, it presents him as the point of departure for a further and more wonderful development. Jesus, as we have seen, not only gives his disciples an example which they are to follow; he supplies the inspiration which will enable them to follow it. "The works that I do," the fourth evangelist reports him as saying, "ye shall do also; and greater works than these shall ye do."[1] The later books of the New Testament show us how this promise begins to be fulfilled.

We may illustrate what the Bible means for our knowledge of Jesus' personality by contrasting the

[1] John 14:12.

impression we receive when reading the Gospels with the effect produced on us by many of the biographies in which recent scholars have summed up the contribution of critical research to our knowledge of the life of Jesus. We raise many questions about Jesus which these scholars can answer for us. But the knowledge we most wish for they often fail to give us, the knowledge that comes from personal acquaintance with the man whose life story they record. There is a voice that speaks to us in the pages of the Gospels that we miss in many a scholarly retranslation, a note of sympathy and understanding caught by the first disciples that no successor has been able to reproduce completely. "If you would know Jesus," Professor Harnack[1] once said to a company of theological students, "you must read your Gospels. There is no other way."

What Harnack said to his students forty years ago would be echoed by those in our own day who have come closest to the spirit of Jesus. It was not by studying what other men have thought about Jesus that men like Middleton Murry and Simkhovitch have won their insight into the secret of this deathless personality.[2] It was by living with Jesus as he is portrayed for us in the Gospels. It is the wonder of the Bible, the thing that makes it the unique book it is, that to those who linger long over its pages it grants the gift of sight.

The Bible as Source of Present Inspiration

For the Bible, we must never forget, is not simply the record of past revelation. It is the source of continuing revelation. It is the book to which men have turned for refreshment and stimulus from generation

[1] The distinguished professor of church history in the University of Berlin.

[2] *Cf.* pp. 97, 98.

to generation, the book from which they have drawn inspiration for the new problems and tasks of their own day. Every great reformation in the church has begun with a revival of biblical study. The Bible inspired the mystics of the Middle Ages to cultivate the interior life; it gave Luther the impetus which led to the great ecclesiastical house-cleaning we call the Reformation; it occasioned the outpouring of the Spirit of God which ushered in the foreign-missionary movement. It is the source book to which our modern reformers go for their social gospel. No other single influence his contributed so much to the Christian life as the daily reading of the Bible. To Christians in every land, to many in our day who are not Christians at all, the Bible daily proves a "means of grace."

This life-giving quality in the Bible is the inevitable consequence of all its other characteristics. Just because the Bible is all we have already seen it to be —the story of God's progressive self-revelation, the most ancient, the most direct, and the most reliable source of our knowledge of the historic Jesus, the record of what acquaintance with Jesus has meant to those who first knew him—it becomes the most effective present means of stimulating the Christian life, and so deserves the central place which Christians give it as their standard of faith and practice.

3. What the Bible Can Do for Us

What Makes the Bible a Means of Grace

During the darkest days of the Great War a Swiss professor sat in his lecture-room at Zürich trying in vain to concentrate his attention upon his lectures. Across the border he could hear the guns booming, and he realized that every shot was mowing down young men like his own pupils. All that he said about

God and Christ, about salvation and brotherly love, seemed to him a mockery, and for a time he felt as if he had lost God out of the world.

In his dilemma he turned to the pages of Israel's prophets. There he read of men who had been through experiences like his own. They had seen their country devastated, their homes destroyed, their countrymen carried into captivity, the temple in which they worshipped levelled with the ground. Yet they had been able, in and through it all, to discern the working of a divine purpose and to retain their faith that love could triumph over man's ignorance and sin. Through the prophets, Professor Ragatz found his way back to a living God, Master of the fate of present-day Europe, exactly as in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah he was Master of the fate of Israel.[1]

Almost exactly four hundred years earlier a German monk in his cell at Erfurt was wrestling with the problem of his personal relation with God. He had tried to win inner satisfaction by loyal observance of the discipline which his monastic rule required; but the harder he tried, the more conscious he became of his own inadequacy and failure. In this crisis he opened his Bible and in Saint Paul's epistle to the Romans he read the words: "The just shall live by faith." It seemed to him as if scales had fallen from his eyes. A new conception of what life might mean opened before him, and for the first time in many years he felt at peace.

What the Bible did for Swiss professor and German monk it has done for men in every age. By acquainting men with those who have found God before them, it has helped them to find God for themselves; and it has done this at all the points at which human

[1] I owe my knowledge of this incident to personal correspondence with Professor Ragatz.

need is greatest. Through the Bible, God has been teaching men what to think, what to do, how to feel, and he is teaching them in all these ways to-day.

But he does not do this by giving definite answers to our questions, which relieve us of the necessity of making independent decisions of our own! Instead we are put into touch with other men and women who have met the same questions, and, above all, with Jesus Christ. The Bible, as we have seen, is not a system of doctrine giving us our creed in final form. It is not a code of laws defining the niceties of conduct. It is not a collection of rules for the cultivation of personal piety. It is the book of our growing and expanding humanity, the book which shows us how men's ideals have been slowly purified and their standards elevated under the guidance of God's Spirit until they have found their most complete and perfect expression in the character of Jesus Christ.

What the Bible Can Do for Us

More particularly, the Bible helps us to realize afresh the perennial vitality of the central convictions of the Christian life—such truths as the love of God, the Lordship of Christ, the fact of sin, the need of redemption, the vitalizing influence of the Spirit of God, and the hope of immortality. In reminding us of these eternal truths, it is not speaking to us of matters of which we have no first-hand knowledge, but of realities which are as near to us and as significant for our lives as the earth on which we stand or the air we breathe. The Bible was not given to us in order that we might make other men's experience a substitute for our own. Each of us, as we have seen, must win his own experience and form his own judgment for himself. But when we have done this, the Bible rectifies our limited and imperfect conclu-

sions by the larger vision of men and women wiser than ourselves.

As the Bible clarifies our thinking by making us acquainted with what the great men of the past have thought before us, so it helps us to make right decisions by introducing us to those who have lived nobly and dared greatly for their faith. We can relive the world-old conflict between ethical and ceremonial religion with the prophets of Israel. We can face the factions that divide the church and the selfishness that threatens her unity as we identify ourselves with the experiences of Saint Paul in Corinth or in Galatia. We can mingle with the throngs that crowded about Jesus as he taught from the hillside above Gennesaret and follow him through his days of loving ministry. And as we live with him and learn to understand him better, our own duty will grow clearer and the right decision easier. From the religion that forgets man and the ethics that ignores God, we turn to him in whose character love to God and love to man go hand in hand, and, following where his Spirit seems to lead, find our difficulties lessening and the path growing clear before us.

One thing more the Bible can do for us, which is in some respects the greatest of all. It can deepen and purify our emotional life. We live by our appreciations, our hopes and our fears, our aspirations and our loyalties, our sympathies and our affections. If we are to make our lives what they ought to be, we must bring order into this often discordant realm.

The way to control an emotion is to attach it to its appropriate object. The trouble with much of our emotional life is that the proper contact has not been made. We love what is not really lovely and hate what is not really hateful. The dangers we fear are often imaginary rather than real, and the practices in which we find our happiness bring us no lasting joy.

We need to shift the centre of our attention and to fix our thought on God, who alone can command our highest loyalty, the loyalty which finds expression in worship.[1]

Of all the tests that life brings to us the most searching is this: Is our attitude toward God what it ought to be? Do we love God as Jesus loved, and rejoice in him as Jesus rejoiced? What effect have our love to God and our loyalty to his cause upon lesser loves and lesser loyalties? How do this love and this loyalty affect our feeling toward the other objects which fill our world, the men and women we know and like, the people we know and do not like, the great mass of men and women whom we touch only indirectly, and yet whose lives are so intimately associated with ours; the visible universe itself, on which we depend not only for food and shelter and clothing, but even more for discipline and wonder and beauty?

It is to the Bible that we go for the answer to these questions. The Bible is the book which shows us how to bring order and discipline into our emotional life. And it teaches us this lesson just as it teaches us the other lessons, by bringing us into contact with the men and women who have loved most generously, suffered most joyfully, lived most bravely, and worshipped most worthily. Our thought of God becomes warm and glowing as we touch the flaming heart of the author of the 104th Psalm. Our fears are banished when we live ourselves into Paul's victory over pain and danger. Our selfishness is shamed as we watch Jesus in the garden at prayer.

[1] Modern psychology, as we have seen, has given us a better understanding of the contribution of emotion to character. Emotion supplies the driving-power which makes action possible. It is essential, therefore, that it should be under control. Our conclusions we cannot alter. They depend upon the evidence which is presented to us. But we can control our emotions, and this control is essential, since it is the emotions which chiefly determine our conduct.

The Final Question

How are we to account for the effect thus produced? Shall we say, as not a few are saying to-day: this sense of mystery and awe which thrills us when we read great passages like the 51st Psalm or the eighth chapter of Romans, is just a subjective impression like other subjective impressions which have their psychological antecedents which can be retraced and classified, and when we have retraced these antecedents and catalogued and classified them, we have accounted for religion, so far as it is possible or necessary to account for it at all? Or shall we conclude that we feel as we do because there is another factor in the process which only faith can apprehend? God is really speaking to us through this book and saying to us the things we need to hear.

In every age men have made their choice between these alternatives, choosing now in one way and now in the other; and they are faced with the same choice to-day. But the line which divides those who choose in one way from those who choose in the other is not determined by their critical opinions. One may take the most conservative view of the Bible, and yet the Bible may remain a sealed book so far as immediate experience of God is concerned. On the other hand, one may accept the last word of the latest critic as to the way the Bible came to be written and yet find it the Word of God, the medium through which God speaks a present message of enlightenment, of guidance, of comfort, and of inspiration. The important thing is not how we interpret the Bible in detail, but whether our interpretation makes the living God more vivid to our consciousness and more completely master of our conduct.

For this is the mystery and wonder of human life: that it is at once human and divine. We do not need

to leave the world to find God; for he is here already —the secret presence that gives meaning and value to all that happens, the unifying purpose that binds all its separate parts into an ordered whole. However far we may go back in time, we find him there. To whatever distant spaces we may penetrate, still he is there. Through all the vicissitudes of human history, the birth of institutions, the rise and fall of philosophies, the growth and decay of civilizations, he remains the ultimate object of man's thought and worship.

"Speak to him, thou, for he hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."[1]

It is because the Bible helps us to realize this eternal presence more vividly than any other book that it retains its perennial vitality. When in its pages we find God speaking to men of other countries and of other modes of thought of his power and his will to redeem, we take courage and believe that he may also speak to us. In our complicated modern world, so amazingly different from the world of the Psalmist, we read again these ancient words and we confess that they are still true to the experience of our own hearts:

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit,
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there.
If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me,
Even the night shall be light about me.

[1] Tennyson, *The Higher Pantheism.*

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee,
But the night shineth as the day,
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee."[1]

[1] Psalms 139: 7–12.

CHAPTER IX

The Christian's Experience of Renewal: or What to Believe About the Sacrament

1. What We Mean by a Sacrament.

   The Place of the Sacrament in Christianity—The Need the Sacrament Meets.

2. The Contribution of Christianity to Sacramental Religion.

   The Sacrament in Pre-Christian Religion—How the Christian Sacraments Began—Differing Views of Their Number and Significance.

3. The Sacrament as God's Gift to Us.

   The Basis of the Sacrament in God's Presence in Nature—The Reason for the Sacrament in Our Need of Symbols—How Catholic and Protestant Conceive God's Presence in the Sacrament—The Sacrament of Vocation.

4. The Sacrament as Our Pledge to God.

   Baptism and the Lord's Supper as Sacraments of Consecration—Need of a Protestant Substitute for Penance—Sainthood: or Taking One's Religion Seriously.

5. The Sacrament as Our Bond of Union with One Another.

   Why the Sacrament Still Divides the Church—Possible Ways to Unity—What the Sacrament Means to the Individual.

A sacrament is a physical object or act which serves as the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. It is the form in which the intimate relation between matter and spirit comes to clearest expression in religion.

Every sacrament has two parts—a divine and a human. As divine, the sacrament is God's gift to man. As human, it is man's pledge to God.

Christians differ both as to the number and the significance of the sacraments. Roman Catholics accept seven —Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, the Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony; Protestants only two—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Friends, believing that life should be wholly sacramental, interpret all sacraments in a purely spiritual sense.

Both Baptism and the Lord's Supper were originally marks of Christian unity. To-day they are reasons which keep Christians apart. This is due in part to differences of belief as to what happens in the sacrament; but even more to differing views as to the proper method of their administration. Some Christians make the validity of the sacrament dependent upon the credentials of those by whom it is administered, and hence would postpone intercommunion until we have a generally recognized ministry. Others hold that the efficacy of the sacrament depends upon the spirit of the participants rather than on the form of the observance and, therefore, believe that intercommunion will prove the most effective means of reuniting the churches.

1. What We Mean by a Sacrament

The Place of the Sacrament in Christianity

Long before the books that make up the New Testament had been collected into a Bible—indeed, before any of them had been written—Christians expressed their loyalty to Jesus Christ through the practice of certain simple rites which we now call "sacraments." Each convert was received into the brotherhood by a ceremony of purification known as baptism and every Lord's Day the assembled disciples commemorated their ascended Lord by partaking together of bread and wine. Both customs have continued without intermission to our own day and are still practised in all parts of the church. With the reading of the Bible, the observance of the sacraments is the most characteristic and easily recognized mark of the Christian life.

Yet there is nothing that Christians do on which convictions differ more widely, and few in which the consequences of difference have proved more unfortunate. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, originally marks of Christian unity, are now reasons which keep Christians apart. This is due not simply to difference of view as to the nature of the sacrament and the proper method of its administration, but also to the fact that in their desire to safeguard the spirituality of the Lord's Supper some branches of the Christian church celebrate it so infrequently that it no longer holds the central place in the religious experience of their members that its importance deserves.

To understand how this situation has come about, we must remind ourselves how the sacrament came

to have religious significance and what need it is designed to meet. This is the need of renewal, a need as old as man.

The Need the Sacrament Meets

When our Lord Jesus Christ included in the prayer he taught his disciples the petition for daily bread, he directed our attention at once to one of our commonest needs and to one of our most perplexing problems. It is characteristic of a complex organism like human personality that it will wear out unless it is constantly renewed. One must not only make a new man, one must put that new man into an environment which will supply him with the food he needs. And the question that faces us all—and never more than to-day—is whether the world we live in is really a world that is able to supply us with the resources that we require.

In its simplest form the need of renewal shows itself in connection with our bodies. Human beings have been known to go as long as forty days without food. But no one, as far as I know, has lived even a third of that time without water. A good part of every day we spend in the homely task of eating and drinking; and many millions of human beings spend all their time in collecting, transporting, and preparing the food that other human beings are to consume. The food problem is not simply a physical problem; it has become an economic and financial problem of the first magnitude.

The mind, like the body, must be fed; and countless numbers of persons are engaged in the enterprise of mind-feeding which we call education. Much of the energy of these persons is to-day being spent in transmitting to the rising generation the knowledge which the different sciences have made accessible to us and initiating them into the processes by

which it is acquired. But knowledge of this kind, however useful or even indispensable, can never satisfy the hunger of the spirit. Man lives by his hopes as well as by his accomplishments. He has longings which are insatiate, ideals still unattained, aspirations after perfection.

Our Lord Jesus had this hunger of the spirit in mind when he spoke of himself as the bread that cometh down from heaven; it is this thirst which he assured us can be quenched with the living water which he provides. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness," he said, "for they shall be filled."[1]

The attempt has often been made to draw a sharp line between these two kinds of hunger, the hunger of the body and the hunger of the spirit. It has been assumed that to satisfy the spirit, one must mortify and even starve the body. Monasticism is the most consistent and thoroughgoing of these attempts. The monk believes that he can win peace of spirit by suppressing bodily desire, or at least reducing it to a minimum, and to that end fasts and practises other physical austerities. These practices may be defended as necessary to harden the will and fortify it for its arduous climb to perfection. The fact remains that their effect has often been to widen the gap between the world of nature and the world of spirit and to obscure, if not altogether to contradict, Jesus' view of the physical universe as God's handiwork, the instrument through which he is daily imparting to his children the sustenance and the happiness they need.

But in fact it is impossible to carry the ascetic ideal to its logical conclusion. Even the most rigorous monk is body as well as spirit, and must use hand and ear and eye for the accomplishment of his

[1] Matt. 5:6.

spiritual purpose. No secret message can come to him from God unless it is registered physically on the brain; no word of healing or sympathy can pass from him to his brother man but is conveyed by some channel of sense. One may modify the point of contact between body and spirit; one may alter one's emphasis or change the angle of one's approach; one cannot sever the bond. Whether our need be of food for the body, for the mind, or for the spirit, it is through the medium of sense that the supply must come.

But though nature makes abundant provision for all our bodily needs, not all objects in nature are fitted to give us the nourishment we require. So mind and spirit require special sustenance and must feed on the appropriate objects. If sense is to minister to spirit as well as body, we must find something in nature which lends itself to spiritual interpretation, some significant object or event which renews our inner life by putting us into contact with the unseen reality which is functioning through nature.

This elemental fact—basic for every sound philosophy of religion—furnishes the point of departure for one of the oldest and most persistent of all forms of religion: the form we know as sacramentalism. A sacrament in the simplest meaning of the term is some physical object or act which serves as the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. It is the form in which the intimate connection between matter and spirit receives clearest recognition in religion. Every great religion has its sacraments, though it may use different objects for the purpose and explain their use in different ways.

2. The Contribution of Christianity to Sacramental Religion

The Sacrament in Pre-Christian Religion

In primitive religion the presence of the divine in nature is conceived in a very literal and naïve way. Deity is localized in special places—the mountain, the tree, the river, the sun. It is associated with particular living beings, sometimes human beings, sometimes animals. Its virtue is conveyed by physical objects. One eats the flesh of the sacred animal in order to acquire his strength or his courage. Conversely there are objects which it is dangerous to touch because of the immanent deity. When Uzzah in presumption lays his hand upon the Ark of Jehovah, he drops dead.[1] So there are places so sacred that only the priest dare approach them and then only after a long process of purification and sacrifice. In a hundred ways man has tried to localize deity, to define the place of his presence and the instruments of his activity, and the result is sacramental religion.

The objects with which deity is thus associated are often, so far as we can see, chosen quite arbitrarily. There is no natural and inherent connection between the nature of the object and the spiritual reality it is supposed to mediate, between sign and thing signified. If originally there was such a connection, it has long ago been lost in the mists that hide the origin of the race. The generations that succeed one another find the sacred object already there, and they accept it with the customs by which it is surrounded on the authority of tradition, without asking any further reason for what they do.

With the loss of connection between the sign and the thing signified there goes another danger still

[1] II Sam. 6:7.

more serious—the danger of attributing to the physical object a magical power quite apart from the effect produced upon the spirit of the worshipper. There are forms of religion, many of them of immemorial antiquity, in which worship is completely divorced from morals. A man's piety depends on what he does, not at all on the motive he brings to the doing of it. If the sacrifices are rightly performed and the temple duly visited, the gods are appeased.

Yet in spite of these dangers, sacramental religion persists and challenges our attention by its perennial vitality. Wherever men have worshipped at all, they have used the helps which nature provides. They have built temples and consecrated them to deity. They have painted pictures and carved statues. They have devised ritual and appointed holy days. They have set apart priests and expressed their fellowship by the communion meal. Christianity is no exception. It is a sacramental religion, and it could not hope to be the universal religion unless it were.

How the Christian Sacraments Began

Jesus belonged to a people who worshipped God not only in the synagogue, where the Bible was read and commented on, but in the temple at Jerusalem, with its elaborate ritual of purification and sacrifice. This ancient way of approach to deity Jesus practised, and his disciples followed his example. After the resurrection they frequently gathered at the temple and assisted at its sacrifices. They continued to practise the ancestral rite of circumcision. It was not until Paul made the issue at the Council of Jerusalem, many years after Jesus had died, that it was recognized that the ritual practices of the Jews were no longer binding upon Christians.[1]

But though Christians no longer felt bound by the

[1] Acts 15:1–29.

ritual of their fathers, they substituted other ceremonies of a more distinctly Christian character. Converts were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; and on the Lord's Day—at first in connection with the common communion meal, afterward as a separate service—they consecrated bread and wine and partook of them in remembrance of their risen Lord.

These acts of worship were not at first sacraments in the later sense of the term, for the simple reason that for the early Christians all life had become sacramental. The presence of God in the person of the Master had consecrated human nature and that process was continued, so they believed, in his body, the church. Through the gift of the Spirit men and women who trusted in him had become new creatures, and all that they did was to be done to the glory of God. As the books we call our "Bible" were only gradually separated from other Christian writings and made into a sacred book, so the acts which we now call "sacraments" were only gradually separated from other religious acts and given a special and unique sanctity.

Differing Views of Their Number and Significance

As in the case of the Bible, the process of selection did not always lead to the same result. The Bible of the Catholic, as we have seen, contains books which the Bible of the Protestant omits. So Roman Catholics give sacramental significance to seven out of the many religious acts which were practised in the early church—Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony. Protestants, on the other hand, recognize only two sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Yet in differing ways the older and simpler practice survives. Besides the seven sacraments, Roman

Catholics recognize a number of other acts and objects to which special sanctity attaches, the so-called "sacramentals"[1] (*e. g.*, the crucifix, the rosary, holy water, the scapula, the sign of the cross). Protestants on their part justify their restriction of the sacraments to two, partly as a protest against the superstitions which had gathered about the Roman practice, partly on the ground that for the Christian, in the last analysis, all life is sacramental. The Friends, most consistent of Protestants in their logic, draw from this principle the conclusion that since God is equally present everywhere, no special sacraments are required.[2]

For the Roman Catholic, the central sacrament is the church service itself. This centres in the Mass —the solemn service in which, according to Roman Catholic theory, the sacrifice of Christ is re-presented and its benefits made accessible to all believers. All the other sacraments—baptism, penance, and the like—have their meaning either as preparations for, safeguards of, or continuations of, this all-important sacrament.

The Reformers reduced the number of the sacraments from seven to two. They simplified the service and translated it into the language of the people. They restored the preaching of the Word to its central place as the means of grace *par excellence*, put the Bible into the hands of the people, made provision for its systematic exposition by the sermon, and put the sacrament in its proper place as the Word acted.

In the course of history the significance of the

[1] A sacramental is defined in the *Catholic Encyclopædia* (vol. XIII, p. 292) as a rite "the object of which is to manifest the respect due to the sacrament and to secure the sanctification of the faithful."

[2] A similar position is taken by the Salvation Army for reasons given by General Bramwell Booth in his book, *Echoes and Memories* (New York, 1925), pp. 191–200.

sacrament has been variously explained. Sometimes it has been interpreted as an act of God working its effects *ex opere operato*, that is, without any cooperation of man. And, again, the part played by the participant has been emphasized. But, however it has been interpreted, two elements have always been present, the divine and the human. The sacrament has been thought of both as God's gift to man and as man's pledge to God. These are the constants, whatever else may vary. Christians may differ as to how the two are related; that they belong together all agree.

3. The Sacrament as God's Gift to Us

The Basis of the Sacrament in God's Presence in Nature

This double significance of the sacrament as at once God's gift to us and as our pledge to him is simply another illustration of a truth that meets us wherever we encounter vital religion—the truth that every experience that mediates God is both human and divine. We have seen this in connection with our study of the Bible; we have seen it in connection with our study of the church. Most clearly of all, we have seen it in our study of Jesus. Nowhere could we isolate God from the medium in which he works and say "this is finite and that infinite; this is human and that divine." The sacrament is no exception to this rule. It is at once divine act and human experience.

All Christians will agree that the sacrament becomes a means of grace to those who participate in it in the measure in which they forget themselves and concentrate their attention on the divine Being who reveals himself in it. It is God who gives and we who receive; God who imparts and we who respond. Un-

less we detect in the bread and wine a spiritual reality our participation will be in vain.

This experience of discovering God in his handiwork is only one illustration of a principle of wider application—the presence of God in all nature. The special sacraments of the water and the bread are capable of becoming the instruments through which the grace of God is mediated to man only because all nature has sacramental significance or, in other words, is itself the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual presence.

"Afar I sought thee in the radiant sky,
But thou art near;
In every breeze that sings its lullaby,
Thy voice I hear.

Afar I sought thee in heroic deed
Still to be done;
But thou dost speak in every brother's need
Beneath the sun.

So let me feel thy presence day by day,
In wind or sod,
That every bush I meet upon my way
Shall glow with God.

So let thy spirit kindle my desire
Self to deny
That every common deed shall flame with fire
As doth thy sky."[1]

The philosophers have invented a name for this intimate relation between matter and spirit. They call it the immanence of God. This is only their way of saying that everything we see and touch and handle has two sides, an inner and an outer, and that we understand it correctly and use it aright only when the stimuli which come to us through sense become the means of introducing us to the unseen presence which gives meaning and value to life.

[1] Brown, W. Adams, *The Quiet Hour* (New York, 1926), p. 48.

What the philosophers explain to us the poets make us feel:

"Here in my curving hands I cup
This quiet dust—I lift them up.

Here is the mother of all thought,
Of this the shining heavens are wrought,
The laughing lips, the feet that rove,
The face, the body, that you love;
Mere dust, no more—yet nothing less;
And this has suffered consciousness,
Passion and terror: this again
Shall suffer passion, death, and pain.

For, as all flesh must die, so all,
Now dust, shall live. 'Tis natural;
Yet hardly do I understand—
Here in the hollow of my hand
A bit of God himself I keep,
Between two vigils fallen asleep." [1]

Jesus, as we have seen, had to an extraordinary degree the sense of God's presence in nature. He lived in a world that was vocal with God. Every flower was God's handiwork, every bird God's messenger. God's sun it was that shone on evil and good; his rain that fell on just and unjust. In his great storehouse of nature there was food and to spare for every need.

As nature ministers to our need of bodily sustenance, supplying the food and drink and raiment we need, so nature ministers to our deeper need for beauty, stirring within us the sense of wonder and adoration, as through the beauty that appeals to sense in sunrise or storm we are led on to recognize the beauty of holiness which is spiritually discerned.

Discipline, too, comes to us through our contact with nature. In the presence of her inexorable laws, we learn to submit our wills to the inevitable. Face to

[1] Wheelock, J. H., *The Bright Doom* (New York, 1927), p. 15.

face with her unanswerable questions, we are taught to possess our souls in patience. Tempered by the pain which she inflicts, we learn fortitude and grow strong to meet the more searching discipline that comes to us through our conflict with sin.

The Reason for the Sacrament in Our Need of Symbols

But many-sided as is nature's ministry, fitted to meet our need at every point, our spirits are not always equally responsive. It is not easy to love as Jesus loved or to be perfect as he would have us be perfect. Long and arduous is the climb and we often grow weary and need to have our strength renewed. That hunger of the soul of which we have spoken, that thirst for the living water that will vitalize our spirit, grows ever more acute as we realize what it is after which we aspire and measure the distance which still separates us from the goal. We long, therefore, for some clear and convincing evidence of God's presence in the world of sense, some sensible proof that the God to whom we speak is really there.

Such a sign is the sacrament. It takes our wandering thoughts and concentrates them on some familiar object which suggests to us the ever-present deity who so easily eludes us just because he is always there. The need it answers meets us on every side of our life—in the home, in our business, in the state. We need some sign to make real to the senses the spiritual reality in which we believe, the ring to consecrate the marriage bond, the seal to ratify the completed agreement, the flag to typify the spiritual bond which unites us as citizens of our country. So the ritual of baptism reminds us of God's gracious offer of forgiveness, and the bread and the wine of his power to remake and renew.

Common to every form of sacramental religion is

its symbolic character. A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an unseen and spiritual reality. Such a symbol may be either an object, like the cross, or an act, like crossing oneself. Both are signs; but in signs of the second kind there must be the active participation of some person. The term "sacrament" has come to be reserved for acted signs and is seldom used of significant objects. The ring is a sacramental object; marriage is a sacrament. The water used in baptism is a sacramental object; baptism is a sacrament.

We note a similar distinction in the case of the Word, the other great means of grace. As recorded in the Bible—the story of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ—it is a physical object in time and space like the water and the ring; but it begins to function only when it is read or spoken. The Bible is a sacramental object. Preaching, which takes the message of the Bible and brings it home to the heart and the conscience, is a sacramental act.

How a physical object like the Bible or a physical act like eating bread and drinking wine can become a means of grace is a mystery which science is as yet unable to solve for us; for it is a part of the ultimate mystery of the relation of body and spirit. It is a process in part conscious, in part unconscious, and, so far as we can see, what goes on below consciousness is just as essential as what takes place under the clear light of reason. We are learning more impressively every day how much that is essential to our spiritual welfare and happiness takes place below the threshold in that unvisited realm where habits are formed and emotions have their spring. It need not surprise us, therefore, that some persons, recognizing the large part played by the subconscious in sacramental religion, are tempted to regard this aspect as the one essential, and to

minimize, if not to ignore altogether, the part played by the conscious participation of the recipient. Where this happens sacramentalism easily degenerates into superstition, and all that is distinctive in the Christian religion is lost.

This tendency to separate act and meaning, it is important to remember, is not confined to sacramental religion. We find it in every form of institutional religion—that which centres in the creed and the book quite as truly as in that which centres in the rite or ceremonial act. Inevitable as they are, institutions, as we have seen, easily lend themselves to the cult of the letter. Custom tends to become master instead of servant, and spoken words, like the acted words we call sacraments, acquire an independent and often almost magical value which takes the place of the reality they are meant to signify.

But in sacramental religion the tendency to confuse the sign and the thing signified manifests itself with special clearness, since here we have to do with physical objects, things which can be seen and touched and handled. The language of the hand and the eye is more primitive than that of the tongue and the ear. When the prophet said to Naaman "Go and wash,"[1] he put religion in the simplest possible form. In sacramental religion we hear God saying to us "Do this," and it is easy to conclude that the doing is all that matters.

This danger is accentuated in pre-Christian religion because of the lack of correspondence between the sign and the thing signified. It is the glory of Christianity that it presents us with objects which by their very nature lend themselves to spiritual interpretation. Foremost among these is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is the first and incomparably the greatest Christian sacrament. His person is

[1] II Kings 5:10.

the natural meeting-place of God and man, and with him are naturally associated in Christian thought and feeling the various outward acts or objects through which the meaning of his life expressed itself—the baptism wherewith he was baptized, the hands he laid on those who were sick, the supper he ate with his disciples, the cross on which he died. The later sacraments gain their significance because of their association with his person, and the view taken of their efficacy will depend largely upon the view which is held of our Lord himself.

How Catholic and Protestant Conceive God's Presence in the Sacrament

Protestants and Catholics agree in recognizing God's presence in the sacrament; but they differ in their view of the way in which his presence is manifested. The Roman Catholic, as we have seen, believes that Christ has commissioned the Roman Catholic Church to be his representative on earth. As he attributes infallibility to the church's teaching, so he believes that the grace conveyed by her sacraments is independent both of the character of the person who officiates and of the attitude of the recipient. Indeed, in the case of the Mass it is not necessary that any communicant should be present. The act itself, performed by a priest duly ordained, accomplishes its purpose, even if there is no one else there. In the Mass the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is re-presented before God and its merits made available for the sincere worshipper, and efficacious for the relief of souls in purgatory. So in Catholic theory baptism remits the guilt of Adam's sin whether or no there is conscious faith on the part of the one who receives it, and ordination confers an inalienable grace, however imperfect the human instrument through whom it is administered.

In the sacrament, as the devout Catholic experiences it, all that is human disappears and God himself deals directly with the penitent spirit.

Protestants realize so keenly the superstitions to which this view of the sacrament opens the door that it is difficult for them to appreciate its spiritual significance for the Catholic. When they enter a Catholic church where the sacrament is reserved and see the worshippers kneeling before the host, as it is enshrined on the altar, they are repelled by what seems to them idolatry. How can God, who fills all things, be confined within a bit of bread?[1]

Yet there are moods in the experience of even the most protestant of Protestants when they understand something of what the Catholic feels when he draws near to the altar. A recent article by a London journalist, himself a Protestant, describes a visit made to Westminster Cathedral, in London, at the time of the celebration of High Mass:

> There was something strangely moving in this rite for one who is outside the Roman Communion. It was not the music alone, though of all the music made in London there is nowhere anything more pure and ethereal and unearthly in its beauty. It was not those subtle approaches to every sense by which the drama of redemption enters the City of Mansoul, by Ear-Gate, Eye-Gate, Nose-Gate, and the rest. There was something more in that ancient rite. The movements of the priests, with their calm and impersonal bearing; the rhythm of the words in the language which of all languages is richest in solemn and sonorous tones; the color and the music—all these things made their appeal to something deep within man; but what was the something more?
>
> There was before us a reserved space, in which before the eye of faith Something was happening of infinite moment. The hidden and supernatural world was invading this material earth. There in that holy place the conditions were fulfilled with punctilious care, and the way was made

[1] A shop-window in Oxford recently displayed a wafer with the ironical inscription "The Cowley Fathers' God."

ready. Human beings were there, separated from their fellows to represent with words and colors and clouds of incense and rhythmical movements the secret of the world invisible, the mystery of the Divine Redeemer.

At the heart of the action was the amazing and "heart-shattering" secret of the Cross, the memory of the Young Man Crucified, in whom God Almighty had spoken, and loved, and suffered in the fields of time.

We looked in silence, save for a brief time, in which we chanted "Credo in Unum Deum Patrem Omnipotentem," and even one outside the fold could "put up pencil and join chorus," as Browning's hero did in another situation.[1]

Protestants conceive God's presence in the sacrament in a more spiritual and less literal way, but they, too, have their experience of the real presence. The Reformers were simply carrying the *ex opere operato* principle one step farther when they concentrated the entire mystery of redemption in the cross —the act once for all performed on Calvary when God himself in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ took upon himself the burden of humanity's sin. It was of this stupendous sacrifice that the sacrament spoke to them as they partook of the symbols of his broken body and shed blood.

> "When I survey the wondrous Cross
> On which the Prince of Glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride."

Protestants differ as to the way in which God's grace is conveyed and the nature of the experience which results. Some emphasize the part played by the memory of Christ's past sacrifice; others the consciousness of present spiritual communion with the living Christ. Some conceive Christ's presence in the sacrament in ethical terms, as the communion of a person with persons; others in more mystical fashion, as an ineffable experience incapable of exact

[1] Shillito, Edward, in *The London Times*, September, 1927.

description. But all agree that faith is essential to the worthy reception of the sacrament and emphasize the need of personal preparation on the part of the communicant.

The Sacrament of Vocation

The difference between the Catholic and the Protestant views of the sacrament comes to clearest expression in connection with ordination—the ceremony by which the priest is set apart to his sacred office. Protestants, as well as Catholics, ordain their ministers, using for the purpose the ancient custom of the laying on of hands. But the significance they attribute to the act is not the same. It follows from the Catholic view of the church as a strictly supernatural institution that those who are to be its priests must be set apart by some definite act through which they receive the grace which enables them to perform their function successfully. This grace is conveyed through the sacrament of Orders, which confers upon those who receive it an inalienable character. Of the three orders of the ministry—bishops, priests, and deacons —only the bishop can ordain. In Catholic theory, he is the direct successor of the Apostles and the channel for the transmission of the grace which they have received from Christ himself. As such he has the power to transmit this grace to others. From which it follows that only priests ordained by bishops can perform a valid sacrament.[1]

Protestants, on their part, regard the ministry in the technical sense as but a specialized form of a wider ministry to which every Christian is called. In the great passage in Corinthians[2] in which the Apostle Paul expounds his doctrine of the church,

[1] Roman Catholics make an exception of baptism, which is valid even when performed by a layman provided there is intent to baptize, water is used, and the trinitarian form employed.

[2] I Cor. 12.

he compares it to a body with many members. In the body, he tells us, each member has his own function but each member has not the same function, and without the contribution of the least of the members the whole body will suffer. Among the functions that the Apostle recognizes is that of government, a function essential to the welfare of the whole and, therefore, to be highly esteemed; but it is only one of many. There are other functions which must be performed—prophecy, teaching, healing, working miracles, helping, and each man or woman is called of God to his or her special task. As the Bible is but the most signal example of a process of revelation which God has been carrying on in all ages; as the sacrament is only the most striking illustration of a spiritual significance which is inherent in nature as a whole, so the ministry in the form in which we know it in the church is but a specialized form of a ministry of vocation as wide as man himself.

This wider ministry the Roman Catholic Church recognizes in its view of marriage. While, as we have seen, the Catholic attaches special sanctity to the monastic life, and most of the great saints have been monks or nuns, he does not regard the life of sex as necessarily sinful. On the contrary, in making marriage a sacrament, the church consecrates the oldest and most wide-spread of all human institutions, the family.

The Reformers rejected the Roman view of the monastic life and, therefore, felt no need of a special sacrament of marriage. They also rejected the Roman belief in a special order of priests and, therefore, felt no need of a special sacrament of orders. In their view all Christians were called to be priests, just as all Christians were called to be saints.

Such a view is consistent with the highest estimate of the dignity and importance of the ministry.

No one who appreciates the part that worship plays in unifying personality and inspiring consecration will underestimate the service rendered by those who are responsible for conducting the work of the church and initiating the young into its significance. Other callings deal with parts of life, specialized interests that separate people from one another. Only religion is concerned with life as a whole. The calling of the Christian minister, therefore, by its very nature is one of unique importance and responsibility.

Yet what the minister does by profession, every Christian is called to do according to the measure of his opportunity. Whether he be a doctor or a lawyer, a farmer or a carpenter; whether he work with his hands or with his brain; whether he is married or single, he is called to be a priest, that is to say, a mediator between God and man; sharing the insight that has come to him through Jesus, and consecrating his life to his service. The man who has come to think of life in this way will find all that he does taking on a new significance, and every act done in this spirit will become sacramental.

4. The Sacrament as Our Pledge to God

Baptism and the Lord's Supper as Sacraments of Consecration

Whether we consider body, mind, or spirit, no account of the demand which we make upon our environment is adequate which describes it simply in terms of intake. The food we consume will do us little good unless we convert it into forms of energy which can express themselves in action. The body needs exercise, the mind the discipline of reflective thought, the spirit the opportunity of self-expression in thanksgiving and consecration. This phase of the

Christian life, too, finds expression through the sacrament. The sacrament is not only God's gift to us, it is our pledge to him of worship and service.

Man's part in the sacrament appears most clearly in the requirement of faith as the condition of its worthy reception. Faith, as we have seen, is an act of the will by which the Christian commits himself to the unseen God, as he is graciously revealed in Jesus Christ. By faith we hear God speaking to us in the sacrament and respond to what we hear by personal consecration.[1]

This active, outgoing side of the sacrament is expressed in the name that describes it. Our English word "sacrament" is derived from the Latin word "sacramentum," which meant originally an oath of allegiance. It was the promise which the soldier made when he joined the ranks. No more appropriate word could be found to describe the pledge the Christian gives to Christ when he enlists in his service.

This element of commitment appears most clearly in connection with the sacrament of baptism. In primitive Christianity most of those who were baptized were adults. Baptism was the sign which marked the convert's abandonment of his pre-Christian way of life for a new life of consecration and service. It involved a complete break with the past, a commitment so unreserved that any conscious sin

[1] Roman Catholics, as well as Protestants, recognize the necessity of faith for the worthy reception of the sacraments, but they define faith as assent to the teaching of the church. To have faith, as the Roman Catholic understands it, means to believe what the church through its authorized spokesman tells him about the sacraments and to act accordingly. Protestants interpret faith in a more intimate and personal sense. To have faith, as the Protestant understands faith, means to realize that God, his Father, is speaking to him directly and to respond to what he says in trust and obedience. As the Bible becomes God's word to me only as by faith I hear God speaking to me through its pages, so the sacrament becomes God's gift to me only as by faith I recognize him as the giver and by an act of mine appropriate the gift.

imperilled the status of the new convert. So the custom arose of postponing baptism to the end of life that the risk of falling away might be reduced to a minimum. It was only later, as the number of converts increased and the church became an established institution, that church-membership was extended to the children of believers and the custom of infant baptism arose.

The Baptists retain this primitive conception of the sacrament. For them baptism remains the sacrament of conversion, the act that marks in the most dramatic way possible the transition between two worlds. For this reason, as well as on historical grounds, they have retained the practice of immersion as a symbol which appropriately typifies the death of the old man and the birth of the new.

In the case of infants, who cannot exercise faith for themselves, the act of consecration which gives the sacrament its spiritual meaning is performed by their parents. In setting their child apart to God, they pledge themselves to instruct him in the principles of the Christian religion, in confident expectation that when he comes to years of discretion he will renew the pledge which they have made on his behalf. In doing so they bear witness to the fact that there is no such thing as an isolated individual, but that in a very literal sense we are members one of another. The child who is born into a Christian family becomes by that very fact a member of a spiritual society and baptism is the outward and visible sign of his reception into its fellowship.

The responsibility of the child to complete what his parents have begun by his own act is recognized in the practice of confirmation. By this rite the baptized person is received into the full fellowship of the church upon the occasion of his first communion. Roman Catholics regard confirmation as a sacrament

and attribute to it a special spiritual grace. Protestants, while recognizing its importance, do not include it among the number of the sacraments.

The self-commitment implicit in baptism and publicly recognized in confirmation is repeated in connection with the Lord's Supper. In the prayer of consecration which follows the reception of the elements the following words occur:

> O Lord and Heavenly Father, we, thy humble servants, entirely desire thy fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. . . . And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee that all we who are partakers of this Holy Communion may be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction. . . . And we most humbly beseech thee, O Heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace that we may continue in that holy fellowship and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord.[1]

This prayer illustrates the two forms which consecration takes, worship and service. We respond to God's gift in the sacrament first of all by thanksgiving, or, in other words, by grateful appreciation of what he is and what he has done. But since God himself has no need of anything physical but finds his happiness in ministering to the needs of others, our gratitude expresses itself in our conduct toward our fellow men, and especially in loving ministry to

[1] The quotation is from the English version of *The Book of Common Prayer,* the model after which all our English liturgies have been fashioned. Compare *The Book of Common Worship* (Presbyterian), p. 37:

"Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose once offering up of Himself, by Himself, upon the cross, once for all, we commemorate before Thee; we beseech Thee to accept this our spiritual oblation of all possible praise for the same. And here we offer and present, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice, acceptable unto Thee through Jesus Christ Thy son."

Note that in this case, as in the American version of the prayer-book, the prayer precedes the reception of the elements.

those who are in need, whom our Lord Jesus Christ has told us to regard as his personal representatives.

Thus on the human side as on the divine, the sacrament is a prophecy of what all life should be. As seen from its divine side it is but the most striking example of a sacramental relation on God's part that runs through all life; so seen from the human side it is but the initial act of a consecration which must be carried over into all that we do. All life for the Christian should be a perpetual thanksgiving: each least thing that we do a new offering up of ourselves to God. Whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God.[1]

Need of a Protestant Substitute for Penance

The Roman Catholic Church associates with baptism and the Lord's Supper the sacrament of penance. In this sacrament the Christian who desires to make his communion is required first of all to examine his own conscience as to his motive in coming to the sacrament, to repent and confess his sin to a priest, and, as a pledge of the sincerity of his purpose, to perform the penance the priest prescribes. For those who are dying, and so unable to perform the prescribed penance, the church provides the sacrament of extreme unction, which makes available for the penitent the merit stored up in the church's treasury without any further action on his part.

The abuses which have gathered about the confessional[2] have led many Protestants to overlook the

[1] I Cor. 10:31.

[2] While the church teaches that in order to approach the confessional worthily one must have contrition, or, in other words, the sincere sorrow that springs from hatred of sin for its own sake, many theologians maintain that when this is lacking attrition, or the sorrow that springs from fear of punishment, is sufficient. So penance has often been conceived by Roman Catholics in an external way and ceremonial acts done at the direction of the priest have been regarded as relieving the sinner of the temporal punishment which would otherwise be visited upon his sin.

profound truth to which it witnesses—the truth that if we are to grow in the Christian life, *we must take pains*. Character does not come of itself. It requires constant self-discipline. If we would worthily receive the gift the sacrament provides, we must do our part to make ourselves worthy.

We are living in a generation which has little place for discipline in its conception of the Christian life. People speak of becoming a Christian as if it were something which one could add to his other interests without any special effort to fit himself for a new life. So far as training is required, it is assumed that each individual will furnish what is needed for himself. But we are coming to see that such easy-going methods will not meet the need of the time. When, at a recent gathering of Protestant ministers, a well-known preacher pleaded for a revival of the custom of confession in Protestantism, he was voicing a need which others besides himself have felt. If the modern church is effectively to discharge its responsibility as a training-school of character, we must revive the lost ideal of discipline. We must find some substitute for penance which is in accord with Protestant principles.[1]

Through the granting of indulgences (*i. e.*, permission to substitute an easier for a more severe penance) the merit stored up by Christ and the saints becomes available for further remission of temporal punishment, which may be used by the one to whom the indulgence is granted either for his own benefit or for that of suffering souls in purgatory.

[1] The Reformers were keenly alive to the necessity of discipline in the Christian life. They broke with Rome not because its demands upon the worshipper were too strict but because they were too lax. Calvin, at Geneva, attempted to revive the earlier and stricter standards. He admitted to the Lord's table only those who had prepared themselves by self-examination and prayer. Those who had committed known sin were required to repent and amend before they could sit down at the table of the Lord. The custom of examining prospective communicants before admitting them to the sacrament was long maintained in the Calvinistic churches and still survives in the Highlands of Scotland in the custom of fencing the tables (*i. e.*, admitting those only who have been approved by the Session as worthy).

More than any other group of modern Christians, the Anglo-Catholics recognize the importance of discipline in the religious life. They have not only restored to the public services of religion a beauty and dignity which they had largely lost; they insist that to worship aright one must fit oneself to do so by self-examination and self-sacrifice. At a time when each individual has been following his own bent and thinking his own thoughts, they have reemphasized the teaching function of the church and are creating a literature through which it is possible for her to teach effectively. In this way they are setting an example which other groups of Christians may well follow.

It is not possible, indeed, for the Protestant churches to prescribe to the individual what he must do, as the Roman Catholic Church does through the confessional, nor would it be desirable even if it were possible. But it is possible for the church to hold constantly before the individual the necessity of self-discipline, to suggest ways in which this discipline may be effectively carried out, and—as a guide in difficult or disputed cases—to furnish the help which may be desired from the experience of others who have faced similar questions in the past.

The duty of the church to make such provision for the moral training of its individual members is reinforced by the growing complexity of modern life. The issues which meet us in the field of Christian doctrine are perplexing, but in the field of morals they are more baffling still. Our relationships have become so involved that no one of us is wise enough to know how he ought to act without the help that comes from the experience of others. But we have as yet done little to organize the vast mass of experience which is continually accumulating in a form that is helpful to the individual. For this reason, such stud-

ies as have been made in connection with the recent conferences at Birmingham and at Stockholm are to be welcomed.[1] Elementary and inadequate as they are, they may be regarded as first attempts to collate and organize the material out of which a Christian social ethics that is worthy of the name shall some day grow.[2]

What such studies attempt for the church as a whole, every minister should be doing for his own people. He should take the material which the church provides and apply it in his own way to the varying needs of each of his parishioners, not that he may relieve them of the necessity of self-discipline, but that he may help each of them to undertake it for himself in an intelligent and effective way.

Sainthood: or Taking One's Religion Seriously

In addition to the discipline provided for ordinary Christians through the confessional, the Roman Catholic Church has brotherhoods and sisterhoods where a stricter mode of life can be followed than is ordinarily possible for those who must earn their living in the world. These orders, as they are called, are of various kinds, and the rules they require of their members differ accordingly; but common to all are the vows of obedience, poverty, and celibacy, the frequent practice of public and private worship in accordance with a prescribed plan, and certain rules for personal self-denial and discipline. The purpose of these rules is to secure a complete detachment from worldly interests and to make the persons so set apart more efficient servants of the church along

[1] C. O. P. E. C. Commission Reports, 12 vols. (London, 1924); Bell, G. K. A., *The Stockholm Conference on Life and Work* (London, 1926).

[2] *Cf.* also the studies made by the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook, esp. *The Church and Industrial Reconstruction* (New York, 1921).

either or both of the two great lines of the church's ministry of worship and service. Those who have attained great distinction in this way the church canonizes as saints, and teaches that the merit which they have won through their sacrifice can be made available for their less fortunate fellow Christians through the indulgence system.

Protestants have rejected the doctrine of the double standard for reasons which seemed to them good and sufficient; but they have not done away with the facts in human nature on which it was based. There is still need in our modern world for men and women who take their religion seriously and are willing for its sake to make more drastic sacrifices than the common run of men, and still it is true that life as at present organized puts obstacles in the way of their doing it. So from time to time movements have arisen in Protestantism which parallel the orders in the Roman Catholic Church. Such a movement was Methodism in its earlier stages; such a movement is the Salvation Army. In these we have the attempt by concerted effort to establish a standard of Christian living more rigorous and unselfish than it would be possible for the individual to maintain alone. Most interesting and successful of all these movements is that of the Friends—interesting most of all for this: that more than any other it has dispensed with the aid of outward rules and relied solely on the inner leading of the Spirit.

Anglo-Catholics, as we have seen, meet the need of those who desire to take their religion seriously by reviving the older monastic discipline. They have orders with definite rules of poverty and obedience designed to emphasize as far as possible the contrast between the religious way of life and that of ordinary men. Through their brotherhoods and sisterhoods they provide opportunities for service for

men and women who break with the ordinary ties of family and calling.

To Christians of another type the monastic life makes little appeal. They believe that the candidate for sainthood should live his life in the world and make his Christianity appear not so much in the things that he does as in the manner of his doing them. Their heroes are men like David Livingstone, or Pasteur, who have grappled with world-old evils like slavery or disease and brought all the resources of modern science to bear in the struggle against them. In the embattled social evils of our day—poverty, unemployment, injustice, race prejudice, and above all, war—they see enemies which will tax to the utmost man's capacity for courage and sacrifice. Still, to the chivalrous spirit, Jesus makes his appeal for complete self-surrender, and still men and women heed the call and, turning their backs on all that the world can offer them, follow him. It was a sound instinct which led the designers of the Liverpool Cathedral to make a place in their windows, side by side with the familiar and well-loved figures of Saint Francis and Saint Theresa, for modern saints like Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling.

5. The Sacrament as Our Bond of Union with One Another

Why the Sacrament Still Divides the Church

The sacrament illustrates in an impressive way the divisive effect of institutions. The difficulty with organized religion, as we have seen, is not simply that acts tend to lose their freshness by repetition so that what was once a genuine means of grace may become for some persons a mere form without value or spiritual significance. It is not even that different

minds interpret the same act in different ways. It is the fact that law stereotypes practice and so prevents us from dealing with each new situation with the freedom that it requires. As a result, the exchange of experience which would make it possible to test the correctness of a position taken and if necessary to change it, is rendered difficult, if not altogether impossible.

A striking illustration of this difficulty was given at the recent Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne. Among the subjects considered at this conference, that of the sacraments occupied a prominent place. What more natural—as a guide to mutual understanding and sympathy—than that Christians who differed in their view of the nature of the sacraments should put their differences to the test of practice? In what conceivable way would it be more possible for Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics to determine what is our Lord's will concerning the sacrament he instituted than by participating in it together? Yet at Lausanne this most sensible and Christian procedure proved impossible. Much was said about the communion as a sacrament of unity. In fact, no common communion was possible.

The situation becomes still more perplexing when we consider how simple the test would be. In matters of faith and of duty it is not hard to understand why men should differ, for here we deal with concepts of the mind on which men equally sincere may not see eye to eye. But in the Lord's Supper we have to do with an act so simple that it is in the power of the youngest child—to eat, to drink, to remember, nothing more. At any table spread by men any group of Christians of any name or creed can sit down side by side. Only from the table of the Lord are they barred by their differences with

one another. How comes it that the rite which our Lord Jesus himself instituted to bind his disciples to himself should have become the outward and visible sign of their separation?

It is just the simplicity of the act that causes the difficulty. A creed may be differently interpreted and a duty differently performed; but a ritual act, like the celebration of the Lord's Supper, is the act of the church as a whole and when the law of the church prescribes how and by whom it must be done, no individual can vary the procedure without becoming a lawbreaker.

It is, of course, always possible for those whose views have changed to repeal a law, or to amend it, and if every one were of the same mind in this matter this could easily be done; but when we find differences of opinion within the same church, this easy and natural way out is not possible. Those who believe in the freer practice are hampered by their regard for those who believe in the stricter. They may long for the day when the church shall be broad enough to make place for all the gifts and graces which are now distributed among the churches. But they belong to a body whose mode of celebrating the communion is prescribed by law. The existence of this law, as we have seen, prevents the free interchange of experience through which alone fellowship can be completely realized and the questions now at issue between the different Christian bodies be transferred from the realm of theory to that of practice. Yet, since the law is regarded by many of their own members as having divine sanction, they are hesitant to change it lest in their effort to come closer to one group of their fellow Christians they should be led to separate from others.

Such a situation meets us to-day in the Anglican and Protestant Episcopal Churches. The Anglo-

Catholic, like the Roman Catholic, with whose philosophy of religion he has so much in common, believes that God has prescribed a definite constitution for his church and has appointed a ministry to govern it. This ministry, as we have seen, is charged with the responsibility of teaching its doctrines, celebrating its sacraments, and administering its discipline; and for this purpose God has endowed its members with the needed grace for their high office. This grace is independent of their personal character, independent also of what others may think of them. It is a grace of office designed to lift them above the fluctuations of human frailty and insure the accomplishment of the divine purpose for men.

The view of the sacrament follows logically from this view of the ministry. Since God has appointed bishops to be the channels of his grace, only priests ordained by bishops can administer a valid sacrament. To the Anglo-Catholic, therefore, it seems entirely natural that those only should be admitted to communion who share this view of the nature of the sacrament and have complied with the conditions which its acceptance implies.

Other members of the Anglican and Protestant Episcopal communion do not share this view of the episcopate. They do not believe that the divine grace is tied to any order of the ministry, or claim for any single way of celebrating the Eucharist the monopoly of the divine blessing. They gladly recognize that the Lord's Supper as celebrated in the non-liturgical churches has been, and still is, a means of grace. Yet they, too, make unity of worship depend upon unity of order and like the Anglo-Catholics would postpone intercommunion until such unity has already been attained.

A similar situation meets us in the case of the Baptists, the communion which of all Protestant

bodies has taken the sacrament most seriously. The Baptists, like the Anglicans, have their high and their low churchmen, those who insist upon close and those who practise open communion. But since they are congregationalists in their polity, the scruples of those who believe in close communion cannot limit those who believe in open communion. In the case of the Baptists, there is no law that requires uniformity of action, and hence, if they will, they can join with other Christians in the common celebration of the communion.

Possible Ways to Unity

It is difficult to believe that those who take our Lord's word seriously can long be content with such an anomalous situation. If the Lord's table be really the table of the Lord, some way must be found for all his people to share its benefits together. The sacrament which is pre-eminently the sacrament of unity cannot remain forever the outstanding mark of division. There are, no doubt, precautions which will need to be taken, safeguards of education and training which will need to be prescribed, habits of dignity and reverence which will need to be conserved and cultivated. Immediate indiscriminate intercommunion may be neither practicable nor desirable, any more than indiscriminate exchange of pulpits is practicable. But on solemn occasions like the meetings at Lausanne and Stockholm, when great companies of Christians meet to discuss their common problems, in local communities where only one church exists, and no other means of access to the sacrament is possible, on the mission field where new national churches are rising that are strangers to the divisions of our Western Christianity, it should surely be possible to find some way consistent with

the law of the churches to make the sacrament accessible to all.

We are confirmed in this hope by what has already taken place in the allied fields of doctrine and of morals. Here, too, the churches have laws to which their ministers give assent. In the early church indeed, as we have seen, uniformity of doctrine was regarded as even more important than uniformity of worship. We are told by scholars that one of the chief reasons which led to the development of the episcopate was the desire to safeguard the purity of faith. Those who did not accept the historic creed in the form in which the church had prescribed it as their personal confession of faith were *ipso facto* declared heretics. Moreover, the church, through its constituted authorities, was the guardian of the morals of Christians as well as of their beliefs. This control, as we have seen, the Roman Catholic Church still attempts to exercise through the confessional.

Both in the case of doctrine and of morals, however, the rigidity of the early practice has little by little been relaxed. We no longer require ministers of the same church to agree on all points in their interpretation of the creed; nor does the fact that such differences exist prevent the ministers of different churches from having fellowship with one another. So members of churches whose conception of the church's social responsibility differs widely are working side by side in church federations and social-service commissions.[1]

[1] At Lausanne there were representatives of churches which required assent to the Apostles' or Nicene creeds of their ministers; others which required subscription to longer and more recent creeds, like the Confession of Augsburg or of Westminster; still others which recognized no creed as binding save the Bible. Yet all united in a single statement of the church's message to the world. So at Stockholm men of widely different social philosophy organized for the purpose of giving more effective expression to their common loyalty to Jesus Christ and his cause.

Such experiences warrant the hope that the present obstacles to intercommunion will not prove insuperable. But if progress is to be made, we must go to work in the right way. We must not let a preconceived theory of the nature of the ministry prevent us from trying the experiments which will determine the efficacy of the ministry. We must not shut our eyes to what God is doing for other Christians, even when his way of doing for them differs from his way of doing for us. Even the Roman Catholic Church admits that the final proof that the Catholic Church is the true church must be that she produces saints. If we discover, as we do, that saints are to be found in other churches than our own, then the ministry that God has so blest must be regarded as a true Christian ministry.

Only in this way can we make progress toward that universally recognized ministry on which those who make much of order lay so much stress. Recognition will come, if at all, in the way in which Jesus has taught us that all the best things in life must come, by the way of trust and of sacrifice. It is useless to claim as a right that which would be of value only if freely given. If, as seems not unlikely, the reunited church of the future is to have bishops, it will be because in God's providence we have been led to see that bishops have some service to render which is for the good of the whole church. To-day those who might accept episcopacy as a desirable form of government are kept apart by their differences as to the reasons which make it desirable.

Saint Paul pointed the way out of our difficulty when he turned the thoughts of his readers from the way of law to the way of faith. When we abandon the discussion of rights and take our stand on the broader platform of privilege, the prospect of agreement will grow brighter. What each of us in his heart of hearts

desires, if he is sincere, is that which is best for the good of the whole. Where this spirit prevails we shall find the unity after which we all aspire realizing itself in fact.

What the Sacrament Means to the Individual

In the meantime let us concentrate our thought on the things that unite rather than on those which divide. To a far greater extent than we often realize, the sacrament is to-day a bond of present unity among Christians. Under its varying forms it brings vividly to our consciousness the God with whom in the last analysis we all alike have to do. However we may conceive God's presence in the sacrament, the proof that it is really his means of grace is that when we come to it in penitence and faith we find God there. This discovery is not dependent upon the special view which may be held of the historical origin of the sacrament or of the special way in which the grace it conveys is mediated. As in the case of the Bible, the other great means of grace, it comes through the immediate witness of God's Spirit to our spirits. In the sacrament God speaks to us directly, revealing to us his presence and assuring us of his love. And the proof that it is really God with whom we have to do is the spiritual uplift and renewal which accompany and follow from this experience.[1]

Take the sacrament which to Protestants and Catholics alike marks the beginning of the Christian life—Baptism. How great the contrast between the thing done and the thing signified. A few drops of water sprinkled on the head of a child, a few words

[1] Roman Catholics, as well as Protestants, recognize a spiritual communion, which is independent of physical participation. At High Mass, only the priest communicates, but all present share spiritually in the experience. So one need not go to the church where the sacrament is reserved to meet his Lord. The knowledge that he is there makes communion possible wherever the worshipper may be.

spoken by the officiating minister, and the child is transformed from an individual standing or falling by his own individual acts into a member of the church of Christ, the mystical body to which all those belong who have named his name and committed themselves to his service. All that the experience of the past has laid up for him of instruction and inspiration in Bible and creed is ready for his use, and those who, in trustful anticipation of his later confirmation of their act, have by their faith made him a member of Christ's church are pledged to see that that contact is made real by their own fidelity in his nurture.

It is not strange that a sacrament which means so much for the individual and for the life of the Christian community as a whole should have been differently interpreted; that to some the act itself should have been endowed with a mysterious significance incapable of experimental verification and conceived not only as the sign but as the means of regeneration; or that others, reacting against what seems to them a superstitious view, have not been willing to practise infant baptism at all, but have confined the rite to those who have reached a certain degree of spiritual maturity and can understand what they are doing. Yet, great as is the contrast between the Anglo-Catholic's attitude to the sacrament and that of the Baptist, who can doubt that to each it has been and still is a means of grace. It is just because the sacrament is capable of so many and such varying meanings that it retains its perennial vitality. Like the Bible, it comes to each at his point of greatest need and speaks to him in the language he is best fitted to understand.

Or take that central act of Christian worship both for Catholics and Protestants—the Eucharist. How insignificant the thing done compared to the effect

attributed to the doing of it. Here is a bit of ordinary bread and a cup of ordinary wine; yet at the word of the officiating minister, as the Catholic believes, or through the faith of the recipient, as the Protestant understands, they gain sacramental significance. To the Catholic they become the body and blood of Christ; to the Protestant, the symbols of his spiritual presence; but to both alike they are the food upon which the sinful soul relies for nourishment and growth in grace. Abuses have attached to the rite, as we have seen—abuses so serious that one can understand how to many earnest people sacramentalism seems the foe of true religion, and the silent communion of the Friend the only sacrament worthy of the name. Yet none of these abuses or all of them combined have been able to rob this rite of its perennial appeal as a means of grace for sinful and aspiring spirits. To appreciate its spiritual significance we must know what the Mass has meant to a Roman Catholic like Newman, and at the same time what the Lord's Supper has meant to a covenanting congregation in the Highlands hiding in a glen amid the hills from the persecution of their enemies. It would be difficult to imagine any greater contrast than between the elaborate ritual of the Roman service and the simplicity of the Presbyterian communion. Yet who that has any sense for spiritual values will deny that both Catholic Mass and Protestant communion have been and still are the vehicles of a genuine fellowship with God?

How many the chords which are struck! the needs which are met! Memory, thanksgiving, consecration, communion, hope—all have their place. We remember that first supper so many centuries ago and what it meant to those who took part in it. We follow them on their sad journey to Calvary and bow with them before the bitter cross; and the sacrament becomes to

us the Eucharist, our thanksgiving to God for a forgiveness won at so great a cost. We relive the days that followed the crucifixion and share with them the new hope which dawned with the revelation of the risen Jesus; and our sacrament becomes a communion, the feast in which we recognize the real presence of the unseen Master and feed upon him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving. Communing with him we realize our fellowship with that great company, known to us and unknown, who in many lands and in many ages have partaken and will still partake of the Supper of the Lord; and we look forward to that still more happy day when we shall sit with him at his table in the Kingdom which is to come.

So, feeding our souls upon this living bread, we grow in strength, in insight, and in courage, and are renewed from day to day.

CHAPTER X

The Christian's Fulfilment: or What to Believe About Immortality

1. The Wide-spread Doubt of Immortality.

   Immortality as the Christian Solution of the Mystery of Failure—Reason for the Wide-spread Loss of Faith in Immortality in Our Day.

2. How Jesus Has Changed Our View of the Life After Death.

   Three Ways of Thinking of Life After Death—Why the Older Christian Teaching Concerning Immortality Presents Difficulty to Modern Men—Life After Death as Social and as Progressive.

3. The Christian's Reason for Believing in Immortality.

   The Resurrection of Jesus as Proof of Immortality—The Attempt to Prove Immortality Scientifically through Communication with Those Who Have Died —Different Forms of the Argument from Need.

4. How to Recover Lost Faith in Immortality.

   The Contribution of This Life to Faith in Immortality—Proposed Substitutes for Individual Immortality —The Creative Experience as the Christian Reason for Believing in Immortality.

The wide-spread doubt of immortality in our day is due in part to the change in our view of the universe, which is the result of Darwin's epoch-making discovery; but its deepest cause is a weakening of the sense of individual values which makes life itself seem less worth preserving.

This doubt cannot be overcome by arguments designed to prove the fact of immortality, important as these are in their place. Only an enhanced sense of the value of the present life can make its continuance seem worth while.

This enhanced sense of value Jesus makes possible by his revelation of God's purpose for us and for his world. If life has no more to offer than what we see in many people to-day, why should we wish for its continuance? But if life may become for us what it was for Jesus and those who have followed him most closely, then it is the one thing most to be desired. Many arguments may be given for believing in a life after death but the greatest of them all is the creative experience; the new life which Jesus makes possible for us here and now—a life which reveals to us capacities in ourselves which require another life for their fulfilment.

1. The Wide-spread Doubt of Immortality

Immortality as the Christian Solution of the Mystery of Failure

In his stimulating book *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* Professor Josiah Royce reminds us of an aspect of human experience which presents all but insuperable difficulties to the believer in a rational purpose in the universe. It is not the fact of suffering, cruel and heart-breaking though it be. It is not even the moral tragedy of sin. It is something at once more pervasive and more baffling—"the brute chance to which everything spiritual seems to be subject. . . . The temptation to do evil is indeed a necessity for spirituality. But one's own foolishness, one's ignorance, the cruel accidents of disease, the fatal misunderstandings that part friends and lovers, the chance mistakes that wreck nations!—these things we lament most bitterly not because they are painful but because they are farcical, distracting—not foemen worthy of the sword of the Spirit, nor yet mere pangs of our finitude that we can easily learn to face courageously, as one can be indifferent to physical pain. No, these things do not make life merely painful to us; they make it hideously petty."[1]

Of this capricious and incalculable element in the universe the fact of death is the most familiar example. Anticipate it as we may, it finds us unprepared. It comes to young as to old, to the busy as to the idle, to those whose lives are given to unselfish service for their fellows as to those who make their own pleasure or profit the guiding principle of their lives. And when it summons we have no choice but to follow. We

[1] New York, 1893, p. 465.

are not asked if we are ready. Our friends are not asked if we can be spared. The more indispensable a man is, the more, it often seems, death marks him for its own. We think of Lincoln as he sat in his box at Ford's Theatre, with the unsolved problems of reconstruction weighing on heart and brain. We think of Jesus, a young man just entering the thirties, led out to be crucified between two thieves.

What shall we do with facts like these? How reconcile them with our belief in a wise God and a righteous and beneficent purpose? Had we asked this question a generation ago there would have been no doubt of the answer. Death, we should have been told, is not the end of life, but only a stage in its development. It closes one chapter only to begin another. In the new and undiscovered country into which it introduces us, we shall find the answer to the questions that puzzle us here and receive compensation for the suffering and injustice which apart from our faith in immortality seem an insoluble and heart-breaking mystery.

With such words, or such as these, an old-time Christian would have answered the troubled inquirer who came to him for help, and in nine cases out of ten his answer would have been satisfying. For centuries belief in a life after death has been an integral part of the Christian philosophy of life. In spite of the devastating criticism of the eighteenth century, a criticism which for many people did away altogether with supernatural religion, belief in a life after death remained unshaken. With the personality of God and the freedom of the will it was one of the fixed points from which all later argument took its departure. No attack on God's justice based upon the experience of this life alone carried conviction.

To-day we can no longer take belief in immortality for granted. Multitudes of people—even religious people—have lost the old, unquestioning faith in a

life after death. Even where the fact is not denied, it is no longer confidently affirmed. It remains at most a possibility, a hope; no longer a definite and assured conviction. What is the reason for such a sudden and far-reaching change?

Reason for the Wide-spread Loss of Faith in Immortality in Our Day

In a recent article in *Harpers Magazine*[1] Mr. Gamaliel Bradford attributes the wide-spread loss of belief in immortality to the change in our view of life which has been the indirect but none the less inevitable consequence of the acceptance of the Darwinian theory. The conception of the universe as the scene of a struggle for existence in which species has succeeded species in unending succession, a struggle continued in man, the latest arrival on the scene, but, like his predecessors, condemned to an uncertain and transitory existence which must yield at last to the universal victor, death; this conception, Mr. Bradford tells us, has made the older view of man as the centre of the universe all but psychologically impossible. Seeing man in his true perspective, in the more modest rôle which science assigns to him, it is difficult to perceive why he alone of all the myriads who have lived and died should be assigned an endless existence.

Yet it will not do to make the Darwinian theory alone responsible for what has happened. The breaking down of the sharp line between nature and the supernatural, the discovery of the close connection between the nervous system and consciousness, the disintegrating effect of historical criticism, the disclosure of the inconsistencies in the biblical account of the resurrection, have all had their part in bringing about the change. But even these would not completely account for it.

[1] Darwin, the Destroyer (September, 1926).

For the change is one of emotional attitude, as well as of belief. We are not so much surprised by the fact that men are finding it difficult to believe in immortality as that they do not seem to regret their lost belief. To some sensitive spirits, as to Bradford himself, the passing of the old faith causes pain. They have the feeling—I quote his own words—"of being aimlessly adrift in the vast universe of consciousness, among an infinity of other atoms all struggling desperately to assert their own existence at the expense of all the others."[1] But for others—how many we shall never know—there mingles with the sense of loss a sense of relief as they part, as they suppose forever, from some of the accompanying beliefs with which in the past Christian faith in immortality has been associated.

There is, for example, the doctrine of everlasting punishment. One of the strongest reasons for belief in immortality has always been the need of another life in order to vindicate the divine justice. Even though the righteous might suffer in this world and the wicked flourish like the green bay-tree, a time was coming when this inequality would be redressed and each would receive the compensation which was his rightful due. But this doctrine of retribution, morally defensible and even necessary as it is, was associated with a conception of future punishment so appalling both in its quality and in its duration as to make the thought of the future a nightmare for many sensitive spirits. To realize what belief in hell meant to our fathers, we must read again Jonathan Edwards' famous sermons and try to picture to ourselves the scenes in the little church in Northampton when he preached them. In these sermons Edwards assures his hearers that a time is coming when wives will praise God for the damnation of their husbands,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 406.

parents for that of their children; when even the preacher himself, now pleading even with tears for their repentance, will no longer feel the slightest desire for any change in their state. We can understand the bitterness with which Mark Twain, in a passage cited by Bradford in the article to which we have referred, makes Satan reproach God as one who "mouths justice and invented hell; mouths mercy and invented hell; mouths Golden Rules . . . and invented hell; . . . mouths morals to other people and has none himself; . . . frowns upon crimes, yet commits them all."[1] Much may be lost with the loss of the life after death. At least we are delivered from the hell of our fathers.

Nor was the heaven to which they looked forward such as to make a virile spirit mourn its loss. Granting that the harp and the crown are only symbolic, there was in the promise of an endless existence of ease and rest little to attract an active and energetic nature.

One can sympathize with Heine's revolt against such a heaven as pictured by one of our recent poets:[2]

> "To be eternal—what a brilliant thought!
> It must have been conceived and coddled first
> By some old shopkeeper in Nuremberg;
> His slippers warm, his children amply nursed,
> Who, with his lighted meerschaum in his hand,
> His nightcap on his head, one summer night
> Sat drowsing at his door. And mused, how grand
> If all of this could last beyond a doubt—
> This well-fed moon—this plump *Gemüthlichkeit*—
> Pipe, breath, and summer never going out.
> To vegetate through all eternity. . . .
> But no such everlastingness for me.
> God, if he can, keep me from such a plight."

The thought of heaven as a place of eternal peace,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 406.
[2] Untermeyer, L., in *Roast Leviathan* (New York, 1923), p. 21.

with nothing to suffer and nothing to do; a place where all the battles have been fought and all the sacrifices made, and it remains only to talk over with old comrades the thing one has once been—what is there in all this to appeal to a robust nature? Unless there is something new to be experienced or worthy to be achieved, why not be content to end life with a sleep from which there is no waking?

To recover for our generation the lost faith in immortality, we must not only reconsider the arguments which make it possible to believe in a life after death; we must redefine the kind of life in which it is reasonable to believe.

2. How Jesus Has Changed Our View of the Life After Death

Three Ways of Thinking of Life After Death

We often speak of immortality as if it were a discovery of Christianity, and of the resurrection of Jesus as the one convincing proof of the life after death. We forget that Christians share their belief in a future life not only with Jews, but with Hindus and with Greeks. What was new in Christianity was not belief in a future life, but the revelation of the kind of life we are to live after death. The exhilaration which the resurrection experience brought to the disciples was not the comfort of knowing that Jesus was still alive, but the joy of being assured that they had not been mistaken in their conviction that he was God's chosen Messiah.

The belief in a life after death has assumed three main forms in the course of its history, all of which reappear within Christianity. According to the first, life after death takes place on this earth, to which the dead are brought back by a physical resurrection. According to the second, the soul passes at death into

an intermediate state, sometimes conceived as bodiless, sometimes pictured as having something corresponding with what we here call a body, in which the moral interests and values of this life still continue. According to the third—a view which Christianity shares with the religion of Greece—the soul is by nature immortal, and at death, freed from the limitations of its association with matter, enters upon a life of immediate communion with the eternal Spirit we call God.

At differing periods of Christian history one or other of these differing views of the life after death has been in the ascendant. Originally representing alternative views of the future life, the theologians have combined them in such a way as to make place for them all. According to traditional theology, Catholic and Protestant alike, the life of each individual is divided into three parts: the first, lived here on earth, extends from birth to what we call death; the second, lived in an intermediate bodiless state, extends from death to the return of Christ to the earth; the third and final state is introduced by the resurrection of the body and the final judgment, and is followed by an eternity of bliss or woe, in heaven or hell. Premillenarians[1] introduce between the coming of Christ and the final judgment a second intermediate period on earth—the so-called millennium.

As the life after death is divided chronologically into periods, so it is divided spatially into compartments. The Catholic teaches that there are three different places to which the soul may go at death: hell, purgatory, and heaven. The Protestant makes place for two only: heaven and hell. Purgatory differs from heaven and hell alike in that it is a place of discipline

[1] Premillenarians believe that the final judgment will be preceded by a period of a thousand years, in which Christ will reign on earth as a king in a rebuilt Jerusalem.

in which the soul remains for a longer or shorter period according to the amount of temporal punishment which is still its due. One may suffer in purgatory: suffer so terribly that to the uninitiated eye it would seem as if hell could hold nothing worse. But in purgatory there is always hope of deliverance. Over hell's portal, on the other hand, Dante read the sign: "All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

Why the Older Christian Teaching Concerning Immortality Presents Difficulty to Modern Men

With the change in our conception of the physical universe it has become increasingly difficult to take the biblical statements about the life after death literally. For the New Testament writers heaven and hell were not only states, but places. When Jesus ascended from earth after the forty days, he went to a literal heaven above the firmament, from which in due time he was to return to earth again. When he died, he descended to Sheol, a lower world beneath the earth which contained a place of bliss called Paradise and a place of torment called Gehenna. Hither Jesus went to preach during the days between his death and resurrection, and from this place the righteous will return at the final resurrection to share his triumph upon earth. But for us firmament and Sheol alike have gone with the geocentric universe of the pre-Copernican astronomy. If we still retain the terms, it is simply as symbols of unseen realities. The difficulty here is the same in principle as that which meets us in connection with the doctrine of creation: namely, that of disentangling a permanent spiritual truth from the transient setting in which the science of a former day has presented it.

What Christianity contributes to our belief in immortality is not the assurance that life continues after death; still less is it the revelation of the exact condi-

tions under which that life is to be lived. Rather is it the disclosure of the nature of that life and of the grounds which make it reasonable for us to anticipate it. That life, as it is pictured for us in the New Testament, is a life of Christlikeness, and the reason we dare to look forward to it is that we have already in this life experienced the power of Christ to recreate and to renew.

To learn what is distinctive in the Christian view of life after death we must turn to the place where the Christian finds the answer to all his ultimate questions—the person of Jesus Christ. When the Apostle Paul, facing a crisis in his own career in which death seemed imminent, tried to decide whether life or death was preferable, he found it hard to make up his mind. To live meant that he would continue his work as a missionary of his Master, and he recognized that it might be better for his converts if his life were spared; but for himself he much preferred to die, since dying would mean going to be with Christ.[1]

Life After Death as Social and as Progressive

This passage presents death not as an abrupt break, introducing man into an entirely unknown state of existence, but as the consummation of a life already begun here, a life of personal fellowship and communion in which all the values that make life here worth while are not only conserved but completed. There is a view of the future life in which it is represented as a gradual sloughing off of all that is concrete and individual, till in a very real sense the soul is swallowed up in God. Saint Paul knew of no such immortality. To die was to be with Christ, and not only with Christ but with all those friends and fellow workers with whom he had been working and for whom he had been praying while here; the people

[1] Phil. 1:21–24.

whom he pictures so vividly in his letters; those men and women of Corinth who had given him so much concern, those converts at Thessalonica for whose faith in God he had been so sincerely thankful—these, too, were to meet him in the world to come and his great reward would be that he would see them there.[1]

Life after death, then, for the Christian, is to be a social life. That is the permanent truth which is expressed in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The body as we know it here fulfils an indispensable spiritual function. It is the organ through which we communicate with other persons; the means through which we transmit messages to them and receive answers back. Such communication must still be possible if social life is to continue. When, using the words of the ancient creed, we say that we look for the resurrection of the body, we do not mean that we shall continue to live in a body of flesh and blood like this, but that in the new life upon which we are to enter the appropriate organ of self-expression and self-communication will not be wanting.

Can we go farther and say that the life after death will be one of progress? Here Catholic and Protestant have parted company in the past. Catholics in their doctrine of purgatory have affirmed progress. Protestants in their doctrine of instant sanctification or condemnation at death have denied it.

One can understand the reasons that led to the denial, but to-day they no longer seem convincing. It may well be that the abuses which had gathered about the doctrine of purgatory as it was preached by Tetzel and the other mongers of indulgences in the sixteenth century were so deeply ingrained that Luther's drastic dealings were indispensable. But one cannot but feel that with the gain there was also a

[1] II Cor. 1:14; I Thess. 2:19.

very real loss. The sense of continuity between this life and the next was broken. The Catholic is conscious of belonging to a world in which the dead as well as the living share, in which each communicates with the other and each can help the other. This consciousness gives his thought about the life after death a reality and vividness which is lacking in the experience of many Protestants.

We are beginning to recover that lost sense of continuity. The fact of progress after death is being more and more recognized in Protestant circles. But if we do this, other changes must follow; for progress as we know it here is unmeaning unless there are obstacles to be overcome and testing to be undergone. So we are led to the surmise that in the life to come, as well as here, there may still be room for the discipline of pain. If God, the ever blessed, is not immune from suffering; if (as the doctrine of the atonement teaches) he shares our burdens and bears the penalty of our sins; above all, if in the cross of Jesus he has set us an example which he expects us to follow, why should we think that the mere fact of death should bring us exemption? Surely, in God's heaven, if it is to be heaven at all, there must be lessons to be learned, burdens to be borne, sacrifices to be made, victories to be won.

This gives us a clew to the real meaning of the resurrection of Jesus. Its significance, as we have already seen, was not to convince the disciples of the fact of a life after death. In that they believed already. It was to give them new light on the nature of that life by restoring their lost faith in Jesus' Messiahship. The crucifixion was a stumbling-block to the disciples not because it proved to them that Jesus was no longer living but because it seemed to prove that his claim to be Messiah was mistaken. A saviour who was crucified seemed a contradiction in terms. How

could one who could not save himself save others? When Jesus talked with the two disciples on the Emmaus road, this was the burden of their lament. "We hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel."[1] We hoped, but it seems we were mistaken. The resurrection restored this lost confidence. It convinced them that Jesus was still what they had supposed him to be, God's chosen redeemer. It re-established them in their faith that the life to which he had called them was the right kind of life for them to live. And they welcomed the outpouring of Pentecost with its accession of converts to the new cause as the first-fruits of the triumph which was still in store for the king.[2]

3. The Christian's Reason for Believing in Immortality

The Resurrection of Jesus as Proof of Immortality

This description of the kind of life we are to look forward to after death will help us to appreciate the reasons for believing in it. Chief of these is the experience of Christ's present power to transform and renew. In the consciousness of capacities as yet undeveloped, of possibilities as yet unrealized, we find at once our reason for desiring immortality and our confidence that it will be given us.

Not all Christians, to be sure, have been satisfied with evidence of this kind. They have felt the need of some more direct proof, such as would be given if one could receive a communication from one who had already died. Such a communication, the biblical writers assure us, has in fact been given in the resurrection of Jesus. To many Christians, perhaps to most, this is the one sufficient and conclusive proof of the future life.

[1] Luke 24:21.

[2] On the significance of the resurrection, *cf.* my book *The Christian Hope* (New York, 1912), pp. 89–108.

Yet for some, and these not the least earnest, there are difficulties with the biblical account of the resurrection which make it alone insufficient to carry the whole weight of the argument. In dealing with purely historical evidence, it is always possible to doubt the testimony of witnesses, however direct and well authenticated that testimony may be. In this case there can be no doubt that the disciples believed themselves to have seen Jesus alive after his death. That this belief had momentous consequences for their lives is equally certain. But students who are equally honest and sincere differ as to the nature of these experiences and the weight which ought to be assigned to them to-day. There are scholars who accept the story of the Gospels as it stands and believe that Jesus stood before the disciples in physical presence in the same body of flesh and blood in which he suffered. There are others who regard the experience of the disciples as purely subjective, the creation of an imagination overstrained by the events of the past weeks. There are still others who believe that in the resurrection appearances the disciples received a genuine communication from the risen Jesus but are equally convinced that this communication was given in a vision which had its natural antecedents, physical and psychological. Who can demonstrate which of these three explanations is correct? How prove to one who doubts that the needed demonstration has been given?

The Attempt to Prove Immortality Scientifically Through Communication with Those Who Have Died

One way in which this could be done would be by showing that similar experiences are possible to-day. When the results of a scientific experiment are questioned, we repeat the experiment till the doubter is

satisfied. Such a demonstration is being attempted by the believers in psychical research, alike in the interests of science and of religion.

In his important work *Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*[1] the late Doctor Frederick Myers has this to say of the significance of the experiment on which he and his colleagues had embarked:

> I venture now on a bold saying; for I predict that, in consequence of the new evidence, all reasonable men, a century hence, will believe the Resurrection of Christ, whereas, in default of the new evidence, no reasonable men, a century hence, would have believed it. The ground of this forecast is plain enough. Our ever-growing recognition of the continuity, the uniformity of cosmic law has gradually made of the alleged uniqueness of any incident its almost inevitable refutation. Ever more clearly must our age of science realize that any relation between a material and a spiritual world cannot be an ethical or emotional relation alone; that it must needs be a great structural force of the universe, involving laws at least as persistent, as identical from age to age, as our known laws of energy or of motion. And especially as to that central claim, of the soul's life manifested after the body's death, it is plain that this can less and less be supported by remote tradition alone; that it must more and more be tested by modern experience and inquiry.[2]

One would wish to speak with great respect of a belief which is held by people as earnest and sincere as Doctor Myers, all the more because of the far-reaching spiritual significance they attribute to it. Men of high intelligence who have considered the evidence which is available have found it convincing and have gained from their conviction new hope and new joy. The fact remains that for most students of the subject the case remains an open one. William James's verdict, "not proven," given at the close of a life of investigation,[3] is still that of the majority.

[1] London, 1906.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 351 *seq.*

[3] *Final Impressions of a Psychical Researcher*, in *Memories and Studies* (New York), 1911), pp. 174 *seq.*

To give the reasons for this conclusion would carry us into questions of detail which it is manifestly impossible to discuss here. It is enough to say that these reasons are of two kinds: first, the possibility of an alternative explanation in a case where the evidence is so minute and so conflicting; secondly, the unattractive character of the life which the alleged demonstration is supposed to prove.

Critics of the new method have made much of the trivial character of the communications hitherto received from the dead; their confinement to petty details of time and place. If life after death has nothing better to offer us than what these witnesses report to us, there seems no reason why we should desire it. Better death than an immortality of gossip and of twaddle.

Those who accept the communications as genuine are ready with their reply. In learning a new method we must allow time for experimentation. Where the main thing desired is to establish the fact of personal identity, only details are relevant. Later, when faith has been established and contact has become easy, we may expect communications of a different and a more satisfying kind. Such communications, as a matter of fact, believers in the new science, like Sir Oliver Lodge,[1] believe to be coming to us now. It may be that as the evidence accumulates our present attitude of scepticism will yield to conviction. For many of us that time has not yet come.

But if science cannot as yet demonstrate the fact of a life after death, it can puncture the arguments of those who maintain that it is impossible. Men of as high scholarly reputation as Sir William Osler[2] and William James[3] agree that while no adequate

[1] *Raymond, or Life and Death* (New York, 1916), pp. 349–354.
[2] *Science and Immortality* (Boston, 1904).
[3] *Human Immortality* (Boston, 1898).

scientific demonstration of a future life has yet been given, there is nothing in the findings of science up to date to render such a hope unworthy of a reasonable man. Among the options which life offers to faith this, according to William James, is still a living one.

It is with belief in a life after death as it is with belief in God. We believe in God not because we can demonstrate his existence but because we find in the universe a purpose and a meaning which make it reasonable to believe in him. So we believe in a life after death not because we can prove it scientifically but because we see the God in whom we believe working out his plan in the world, and this plan includes as an integral part the development and perfection of individuals. Like belief in God, belief in immortality unifies our world and meets needs in ourselves which must otherwise go unsatisfied.

Different Forms of the Argument from Need

We have already glanced at some of these needs. There is the need of comfort. When death cuts off some life on which we have learned to lean, we can accept the separation with resignation if we realize that it is only for a time. There is the need of justice. When our hearts are heavy because of the cruelty and oppression of men, we can lift up our heads and be of good cheer if we are assured that what we see here is but the beginning of a story whose later chapters are still to be written. There is the need of permanence. When we face the transitoriness of life, the uncertainty and futility of human endeavor, we are reassured if we remember that there is endless time before us in which to finish what is here incomplete.

But these reasons, legitimate as they are in their

place, need further reinforcement. There are things more important than comfort. What does it matter if I suffer provided that the cause is advanced? Paul once said of himself that he was willing to be accursed from Christ for his brethren's sake.[1] There were Puritans who were willing to be damned for the glory of God.

The argument for justice is a stronger one, but even this is not conclusive. Can I read another's life so clearly as to know whether or not he has received his deserts? Who knows what hidden compensations there may be in lives that seem utter failures, what guilt, unknown to any human eye, may be hidden in the lives of those who seem to us the victims of injustice? How can we be sure, for that matter, that the fortunes of the individual count as heavily with God as they do with us? Though the individual may perish, the race goes on, and who can say but that in the race, at least, even if there be no immortality for the individual, justice will be vindicated?

As for permanence, the argument is weak or strong according to our estimate of the value of the object to be preserved. If the life to come has no more to offer than this life has given to many a man and woman whom we know, why should one wish to have it continued? Why is not death the happiest outcome?

No! If we are to base our faith in individual immortality on a sure foundation, we must dig deeper. The need which immortality meets is not simply that of permanence, but of fulfilment; not the preservation of the thing that is, but the completion of that which is yet to be. We believe in immortality, in the last resort, because Jesus Christ has revealed to us within ourselves, and in others, capacities which require another life for their full expression.

[1] Romans 9:3.

4. How to Recover Lost Faith in Immortality

The Contribution of This Life to Faith in Immortality

If, then, we are to make belief in immortality again a living issue to those who for the moment have lost it, we must begin by making them feel that life here is so significant that it deserves to go on. With those who doubt the fact of immortality we can be patient. If their doubt is unjustified, the event will prove them mistaken, and they will appreciate the new opportunity which death opens to them all the more because it comes to them as a surprise. The people for whom we should feel concerned are those who esteem life cheaply and feel that its continuance is undesirable. For them the only remedy is the complete transformation of personality which Christianity makes possible for those who put their trust in Christ.

We may learn a lesson from the Old Testament. There was a time when belief in a future life was no part of Israel's creed. I do not mean that the Hebrew people did not believe that life would go on after death. Like all primitive peoples they believed that the disembodied spirit continued to live a desolate and joyless existence in the land of Shades. But this existence had no religious significance. In Sheol there were no longer any moral distinctions, no longer any communion with God. But as a deepening religious experience made men realize more vividly the extent of God's care for the individual in this life, it became increasingly impossible to believe that that care ended with death.[1]

So it must be to the men of the present generation. They will recover their faith in immortality when they have recovered their faith in life. All turns on

[1] Smith, G. A., *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament* (New York, 1901), pp. 209 *seq.*

the answer we give to the question with which we began: How are we to think of ourselves? What does it mean to be a person in the Christian sense? Is it simply to be a centre through which for a brief period the forces of the universe make their presence felt, or has the individual man or woman an independent value for God? Is personality the subject of a creative experience—an experience in which new insights are won and genuine values brought into existence? If it is, then it is reasonable for us to desire its continuance, for there is nothing else in the universe comparable to it in value.[1]

Proposed Substitutes for Individual Immortality

A German scholar, Doctor Oswald Spengler, has recently written a large book called *The Decline of the West*.[2] In this book he argues that history reveals no permanent values, but only a succession of civilizations which rise and flourish, only to pass away and leave no trace behind. "One day," he says, "the last portrait of Rembrandt and the last bar of Mozart will have ceased to be, though possibly a colored canvas and a sheet of notes may remain, because the last eye and the last ear accessible to their message will have gone. Every thought, faith, and science dies as soon as the spirits in whose worlds their 'eternal truths' were true and necessary are extinguished."[3]

If Doctor Spengler is right in his philosophy of history, there would be no reason to desire continued existence. In a world without permanent values immortality would be a mockery. But many who doubt personal immortality do not accept this pessimistic philosophy of life. They believe that there are eternal values which endure even when the individual has

[1] *Cf.* my book *The Creative Experience* (London, 1923), pp. 25 *seq.*

[2] Eng. tr. by Atkinson (New York, 1926).

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 168.

passed away. Indeed, they find compensation for the loss of personal self-consciousness in the thought that in the plan of God each individual has his place to fill, and each unit, however transitory its life, has its contribution to make to the life of the whole. In the perfected society of the future nothing that any one has learned or achieved will be lost. What one has begun, others will finish. What one has dreamed, others will achieve. In this thought of the fulfilment of the individual in the progress of society, many sensitive spirits besides George Eliot have found compensation for the loss of personal survival.

But to one who thinks clearly, there is something lacking in such a view. Social immortality may conserve what the individual has already achieved, but it fails utterly to take account of the unrealized possibilities which death cuts short—the plays Shakespeare might still have written, the deeds Lincoln might still have done. Without the resurrection, Jesus would still remain the teacher and friend whose words were cherished in loving memory. He could not have been the Messiah to whose continuing leadership his followers looked forward.

Immortality, then, not in the historian's sense of an immortality of influence, nor in the philosopher's sense of a conservation of values, but in the plain man's sense of the continuance of personal identity, remains the Christian answer to the need for fulfilment. It is through our experience as individuals that we discover both the values that we would conserve and the society through which they find expression. Unless there are persons worthy to be the objects of the amazing love revealed on Calvary, Christ could not be Christ, nor God God. If there be such persons, how can God willingly let them go? It was not one who valued life for its own sake, but the most selfless of men, who said to his disciples when death came:

"Let not your heart be troubled; . . . in my Father's house are many mansions . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."[1]

The Creative Experience as the Christian Reason for Believing in Immortality

We shall recover faith in immortality as we rediscover in ourselves and in others the possibilities of growth and progress which Jesus, our Lord, attributed to human beings. There are people who make it easy to believe in immortality. It is not hard to believe that Lincoln may be still alive, or Michael Angelo, or Dante, or Shakespeare. That an active spirit like David Livingstone should go from his earthly Africa to some new exploring expedition in the heavenly spaces seems natural and fitting. That death should close forever the lips of him who spake as never man spake, we simply cannot believe. But that you and I, if we die, shall live again we dare to believe only because of the inexhaustible possibilities of life, as Jesus has taught us to see them.

Among the virile figures of American public life the personality of Franklin Lane is peculiarly attractive because of its combination of complete honesty and sound common sense. In a letter written when his son Fritz was undergoing a critical operation, he writes as follows:

> Dear Fritz—dear, dear boy, how I wish I could be there with him, though I could do no good. . . . Each night I pray for him and I am so much of a Catholic that I pray to the only saint I know or ever knew and ask her to help. If she lives her mind can reach the minds of the doctors just as surely as there is such a thing as transmission of thought between us or hypnotism. I don't need her to intercede with God, but I would like her to intercede with man. Why, oh

[1] John 14:1.

why, do we not know whether she is or not! Then all the universe would be explained to me. The only miracle that I care about is the resurrection. If we live again, we certainly have reason for living now. I think that belief is the foundation hope of religion.[1]

"If we live again, we certainly have reason for living now." It is on this thought of death as opportunity that I would end—death, the open door that makes possible the fulfilment here denied. In a different sense, perhaps, from that which the author designed, yet in a sense true to the spirit which inspired him, we may make our own the sonnet of Charles Sorley, that brilliant young English poet whom, when only twenty, death in war called to the undiscovered country whither so many of his contemporaries had preceded him:

"And this we know: Death is not Life effete,
Life crushed, the broken pail. We who have seen
So marvellous things know well the end not yet.

. . . . . .

But a big blot has hid each yesterday
So poor, so manifestly incomplete,
And your bright promise, withered long and sped,
Is touched, stirs, rises, opens and grows sweet
And blossoms and is you, when you are dead."[2]

Yet heartening as is the anticipation of personal fulfilment, it is only a part, and not the greatest, of the Christian's hope. Immortality, as Jesus has taught us to conceive of it, is too momentous a thing to be completely expressed in terms of individual satisfaction. There is a passage in another poem of an older poet which supplies what Sorley's sonnet lacks. It is the passage in the Fourth Canto of the *Paradiso*, in which Dante describes his visit to the moon spirits in Paradise. When Piccarda is asked whether she is not "desirous of a higher place," she answers:

[1] *The Letters of Franklin K. Lane, Personal and Political*, ed. Lane and Wall (New York, 1922), p. 191.

[2] Sorley, C. H. *Marlborough and Other Poems, Two Sonnets*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, 1919), p. 77.

"Brother, our will is quieted by virtue
Of charity, that makes us wish alone
For what we have, nor gives us thirst for more.
If to be more exalted we aspired,
Discordant would our aspirations be
Unto the will of Him who here secludes us;
Which thou shalt see finds no place in these circles,
If being in charity is needful here,
And if thou lookest well into its nature;
Nay, 'tis essential to this blest existence
To keep itself within the will divine,
Whereby our very virtues are made one;
So that, as we are station above station
Throughout this realm, to all the realm 'tis pleasing,
As to the King who makes his will our will.
And his will is our peace; this is the sea
To which is moving whatsoever
It doth create, and all that nature makes."
Then it was clear to me how everywhere
In heaven is Paradise, although the grace
Of good supreme there rain not in one measure.[1]

"His will is our peace." God is the central fact in the Christian's universe, whether the part of it we see here, or the other larger part which lies beyond our sight. We long to live, not simply for the joy of living, but that we may worthily fill our place in the immortal company whom God, our Father, is fitting for his fellowship. Whether here or there, life is all of a piece. Death,—without this promise the last and most deadly of our enemies, because the assassin of life,—becomes the greatest of the sacraments; the portal through which we pass to new adventure as we join the innumerable company of every age and name and race who find in communion with the living God and in the doing of his will their peace, their happiness, and their fulfilment.

[1] *The Divine Comedy*, Eng. tr. by Longfellow (Boston, 1867), vol. III, p. 18.

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The bibliography that follows is designed for those who wish to carry their reading further along lines suggested by the text. With the exception of the first section, which gives a selection of works covering the field of theology as a whole, it follows the order of the chapters. Works which will probably be found most helpful are indicated by an asterisk (*). Books presupposing some theological background are indicated by a dagger (†). Roman Catholic works have been indicated by the letters R. C., Anglo-Catholic works by the letters A. C. No attempt has been made to include the literature in languages other than English.

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